

Arab League urges OIC summit to take action on Bosnia, Libya

CAIRO (AFP) — The Arab League Friday urged Muslim leaders at the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) summit in Morocco to take action to help Bosnia Muslims and Libya.

Adnan Omran, deputy secretary general of the Arab League, said the OIC must "assume its responsibilities" in the face of the massacre of the Muslim people in Bosnia.

"After the failure of the European Union and the United Nations to contain the conflict, Islamic states must act to help the Bosnian people and must not stop at simply making speeches," he added.

Omran was speaking before he set off for the Moroccan city of Casablanca, where the two-day OIC summit opens Tuesday.

He said representatives from the OIC's 51 members would also discuss the "injust" international sanctions on Libya in April 1992.

The U.N. Security Council imposed an air and arms embargo to force Libya to hand over to Britain or the United States two suspects in the December 1988 airliner bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland, that killed 270 people.

Sanctions were broadened in 1993 to a freeze on some Libyan assets abroad and a ban on some oil-related

equipment.

Omran also condemned Israel's insistence that Jerusalem was its eternal and undivided capital, and said the Holy City was "Arab territory, the eternal capital of the Palestinians."

The dispute over Jerusalem and the Arab-Israeli peace process would also be discussed at Casablanca, he said.

He urged Muslim states to "adopt a position on the continuation of Israel's nuclear armament, which is a large obstacle on the path to peace" in the Middle East, and to refuse to sign an extension to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty until Israel signs the accord.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa also left Cairo Friday to attend a meeting of OIC foreign ministers the following day.

The Foreign Ministry said it was not yet decided whether President Hosni Mubarak would attend the summit.

Iraq urges OIC to break embargo

In Baghdad meanwhile, Iraq Saturday urged the OIC to break the international sanctions imposed more than four years ago and which have crippled its economy.

A senior Iraqi official called on the OIC two-day summit "not to be satisfied with a resolution calling for the sanctions to be lifted."

Saad Kassem Hammudi, a member of the foreign affairs commission in the ruling Baath Party, told the daily Babel. "We have to start immediately and break the economic embargo, unfreeze Iraqi assets and cooperate fully with Baghdad in all spheres."

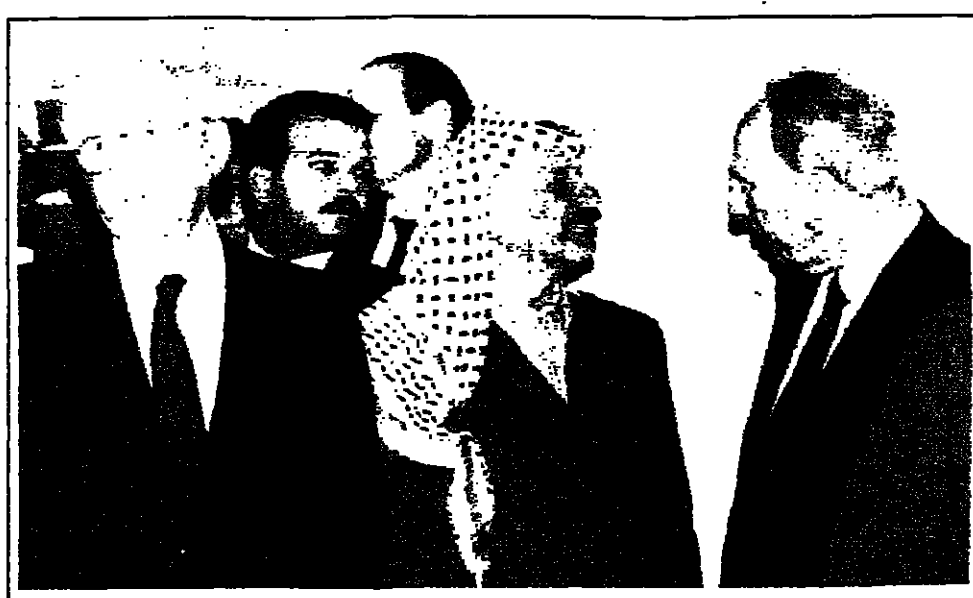
Babel is run by Uday Hussein, son of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

The U.N. Security Council imposed sanctions on Iraq when it invaded neighbouring Kuwait in August 1990, and several countries have frozen Iraqi assets within their territory.

In November, the U.N. renewed the sanctions even though Iraq formally recognised the sovereignty and borders of Kuwait. One of the key U.N. demands for lifting the embargo.

Iraq Vice-President Tariq Aziz announced earlier this month that Baghdad would take part in the Casablanca summit of the 51-member OIC, but there has been no information on the make-up of the Iraqi delegation.

Baghdad boycotted the last summit in December 1991 less than a year after the Gulf war.



Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres (right) attending dinner together in Oslo's Grand Hotel. The three leaders were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize Dec. 10 (AFP photo) away during a photo session on Friday before

Israel should pursue peace with caution, says Kissinger

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger advised Israeli leaders receiving the Nobel Peace Prize Saturday to be cautious in talks with Syria and the Palestinians.

Dr. Kissinger, himself a 1973 Nobel Peace Prize laureate for efforts to end the Vietnam War, said in an interview on Israel Radio that he was uneasy with the decision to also award the prize to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.

"I would have felt more comfortable if it had been given after a long enough period to see that he had really changed and his prize will be justified," Dr. Kissinger said.

The Nobel committee was criticised by some who still see Arafat as a terrorist and led to the resignation of committee member Kare Kristiansen, who was in Israel Saturday to be honoured by a right-wing group.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, who received the Nobel along with Mr. Arafat in Oslo Saturday, should pursue talks "with caution and discipline," Dr. Kissinger said.

Israel and the PLO are negotiating expanding the seven-month Gaza-Jericho autonomy to the West Bank. But after a wave of Islamic attacks on Israelis and recent clashes between fundamentalists and PLO troops in Gaza, there are calls to reconsider Israel's commitment to withdraw troops

from West Bank towns before planned Palestinian elections.

"Arafat has an obligation to make sure these events in Gaza are brought under control because they cannot possibly be repeated on the West Bank," Dr. Kissinger said.

"My view would be to do (the West Bank redeployment) one step at a time and to try it out in one town first and see what happens... It's too dangerous to do it on a general basis. Israel cannot commit suicide for the sake of clauses in an agreement," he said.

Dr. Kissinger, who as

secretary of state brokered a separation of forces agreement between Israel and Syria in the 1970s, said he did not believe there was any point in intensifying the current U.S. mediation of Israeli-Syrian peace talks.

"I don't see the conditions for it now," Dr. Kissinger said.

Asked whether Israel should meet Syria's demand of a total withdrawal from the strategic Golan Heights which it captured in 1967, Dr. Kissinger said only: "I would not make an agreement that depends entirely on an assumption of permanent good will."

Oslo brokers reunite

OSLO, Norway (AP) — At a back table in the Palm Garden bar, the old friends of the "Oslo channel" swapped laughs and tales late Friday about their secret talks on Middle East peace.

The Norwegian, Palestinian and Israeli merchants of peace were back for a well-deserved reward: Watching Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres and Yasser Arafat receive the Nobel Peace Prize on Saturday.

Without the efforts of the tight-knit team gathered at the bar in Oslo's Grand Hotel, there might never have been a peace accord to honour.

Those at the reunion included Terje Rood Larsen and his wife Mona Juul, two Norwegians who spotted the chance to open a back-door channel between bitter enemies — Israel and the PLO — while on a trip in the Gaza Strip.

With them, smiling, relaxed and joking, was Yossi Beilin, the Israeli deputy foreign minister who helped open the channel.

"This year this is front channel, the back channel is over there," Mr. Beilin said, with the secretive team for once within earshot of journalists.

There was Israeli negotiator Uri Savir and the PLO's Ahmad Qureia, usually called Abu Ala, who both stole in and out of Norway

more than a dozen times for secret meetings that led to the agreement on Palestinian self-rule, signed in September 1993.

Although there is much work left on the accord, and much blood has been spilled since it was signed, the people of the "Oslo channel" were in high spirits when they met again.

"We didn't believe a year ago that it would be possible to implement the agreement in the way it was implemented. We envisioned the problems, the violence but we couldn't believe that such a day could come so soon that the whole world would acknowledge the importance," said Mr. Beilin.

Abu Ala said teasingly three things that were best about his many treks to Oslo: "Nice food, the great Mona and the less great Terje."

Mr. Larsen, now U.N. undersecretary for the Middle East, said Mr. Arafat often made a similar observation.

"The chairman always says there are two Larsens: The ugly one — that is me — and the beautiful one — that is Mona," Mr. Larsen, 47, said about his attractive 34-year-old wife, now a diplomat stationed in the Middle East.

"On this," joked Israeli negotiator Savir, "There is Palestinian and Israeli consensus."

Arafat's ex-wife emerges, wants to return to him

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — The day after Yasser Arafat's wife announced they were expecting a baby, an Israeli newspaper on Friday published a lengthy interview with a woman who claimed to be his first wife.

"I am the only one who really understood him. I knew what he was thinking and what made him happy, what was food for him and how to relax him. I understood him completely," Najla Yassin, was quoted as telling the daily Haaretz.

Ms. Yassin, known as Um-Nasser, managed his Tams office and said she and Mr. Arafat lived together for 18 years until 1985. The couple had no children.

Interviewed in an opulent villa in Tunis, Ms. Yassin proudly showed off photos of her and Mr. Arafat, including one of them cutting what appears to be a wedding cake. The 65ish, heavily jeweled woman often burst into tears during the exclusive interview with Haaretz reporter Suha Gharaf.

Born in Syria to a Lebanese family, she was one of the first women to join Fateh, the mainstream PLO organisation. She said she later divorced her Palestinian husband to be with Mr. Arafat, known by his guerrilla name Abu Ammar, in 1967.

"We lived together for many years. He took care of me and loved me very much," Ms. Yassin said. "He was a good man, a sensitive and gentle man."

"When I saw that he was anxious or tired I would go out to the streets and find a Palestinian child and tell him, 'Go to Abu Ammar, he wants to give you a Klashnikov (rifle) so you can fight the Jews,'" she said.

"The child would go in and ask Abu Ammar for a Klashnikov. He would immediately forget all of his troubles, smile, kiss the child and say 'do you see these? They are our hope'," Ms. Yassin said.

Mr. Arafat, 65, had been given to explaining his bachelorhood over the years by



saying he was "married to a woman called Palestine." But there have been rumours for years that Mr. Arafat had promised marriage to a number of women.

Mr. Arafat's 1991 marriage to Suha, his 31-year-old present wife, was kept secret for 15 months.

Unnamed PLO officials confirmed to Haaretz that Mr. Arafat had indeed been married before and it was Ms. Yassin.

However, in Gaza City, Mr. Arafat's office Friday denied any knowledge of the woman and refused to comment on the report.

Mr. Yassin told Haaretz that she is waiting for Mr. Arafat to call her to Gaza and that she has been ordered to stay away until he does. Asked why she doesn't go ahead without a summons, she said: "I can't just do it. He would get very angry."

Shortly after the interview, Ms. Yassin left Tunis for good and moved to Egypt. In a subsequent telephone interview 10 days after the first, Ms. Yassin emphatically denied she had ever married Mr. Arafat and asked to retract the story.

A senior unnamed PLO official in Tunis told Haaretz that Mr. Arafat had bestowed great wealth upon Ms. Yassin but had ultimately left her.

"The jewels that she has are enough to build all Gaza anew. Arafat banished her, but she still dreams of returning to him. In my opinion she doesn't have a chance," the official was quoted as saying.

Lebanese intellectuals slam corrupt politicians

BEIRUT (R) — A group of intellectuals said on Saturday Lebanon was becoming a land of degenerating politics and "get-rich-quick business, bribery and speculation."

Lebanon needed a new political class dedicated to serving the public interest, they said in a public appeal.

"The rule of get-rich-quick business, bribery and speculation is to be condemned as much as the reign of (civil war) militias, drugs and rackets," the 55 intellectuals said.

Calling for an investigation into a widening series of scandals, they said corruption must be eliminated by raising political standards to consolidate democracy.

The group of professors, journalists, artists and professionals said political life was suffering a distressing deterioration that threatened the rebuilding of democracy after the 1975-90 war.

They expressed concern

that corruption charges were being lodged by people with mafia-like links to those they accused.

"Are not those who denounce scandals today the same who covered them up yesterday?" the appeal said.

A parliamentary deputy charged with drug dealing shook the political establishment last month by linking a son of President Elias Hrawi, unnamed deputies, an unnamed businessman and 10 airline pilots with drugs.

Another deputy said members of the previous parliament and politicians were bribed to pass a 1991 law setting up the Solidere company that is rebuilding Beirut.

He named two aides of Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri, mastermind of the Solidere project, as alleged distributors of bribes.

Cold leaves Iranians without heating

TEHRAN (AFP) — Hundreds of homes have been without gas and heating for several days in northern Tehran as distributors struggled to meet a rush in demand caused by a sudden cold snap.

Temperatures have plummeted to below zero in the past week creating a huge demand for gas.

The Iranian gas company has urged the population to "economise on gas to allow everyone to get a supply."

Thousands of flats and houses are heated with gas which has been swiftly developed as a source of energy by the Iranian authorities.

The northern residential areas of the capital have been the worst hit.

Relief convoys give ray of hope to embattled Kabul

KABUL (R) — Three relief convoys have reached besieged Kabul this month, providing a small ray of hope for the people of the Afghan capital struggling to survive cold, hunger and random rockets.

Two U.N. convoys brought 1,500 tonnes of flour, as well as medical and shelter supplies last week, while the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) trucked in medical goods.

"It's a drop in the bucket," said Martin Barber, who coordinates U.N. humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. "If we could do 1,500 tonnes of food a week, it would make a big difference in getting the people of Kabul through the winter."

Factional battles have killed about 15,000 people in Kabul since the communist government fell to Islamic guerrillas in April 1992. Thousands more have been

wounded or forced from their homes by fighting that has wrecked entire neighbourhoods.

"We came here in January after our homes in the old city were destroyed," said Khair Mohammad, speaking for 30 families living cheek by jowl in a small concrete mosque in the government-held northwestern district of Khair Khana.

"The foreign agencies helped us a bit at first, but not now," said the former carpet dealer. "Our women go to the city to beg. Lots of us have borrowed money from shopkeepers."

The 400 people in the unheated Khawaja Abdullah Ansari mosque are living three or four families to a room, crudely partitioned with sacking and cloth hung from ropes.

"We have even sold the blankets given us by a foreign agency because we had no

thing to eat," said Abdul Shakoor.

Coughing children huddle under piles of bedding on the floor or play in the muddy courtyard outside as their parents bitterly recount how they are no longer wanted in the neighbourhood.

"Local people come here and threaten to bring the police to evict us. They say we are good Muslims and our children are disturbing them but we have nowhere to go," one woman said.

Others said 25 families had been forced to leave at gunpoint three months ago for alternative accommodation in a school.

The mullah, Maulvi Mohammad Hussein, said local people had helped the displaced families at first but now felt it was improper for women and children to stay in the mosque.

"They say they will not come to the mosque as long

these people are here," he said. "Now the security people have found another place for them and soon they will leave."

Ariane Curdy, an ICRC nutritionist surveying the needs of Kabul's citizens, said that, apart from displaced people living in public buildings, about two-thirds of 370 families visited in private houses were not living in their own homes.

"The picture is of a town largely depleted of its original residents," she said. Nutrition levels among those in private houses were little better than those in public buildings.

"We are finding that about two-thirds of the girls are malnourished, compared to one-third of the boys," she said.

"The fact that we couldn't bring in food until now means people have had to sell all their belongings," Curdy

added. "The international community has failed to prevent that."

The United Nations, whose convoys were the organisation's first since June, is using local and international agencies to distribute food and other supplies to those thought most in need, but so far there is just not enough to go round.

At a newly opened bakery supplied by the U.N. World Food Programme in the opposition-controlled village of Bagrami near Kabul, 500 families can buy subsidised bread using coupons.

"We have coupons, but we still can't buy bread because we have no money," complained one of a group of veiled women to visiting U.N. officials.

"We don't have any money and we don't have coupons either," came a retort from the crowd.

Barber said food prices

could be brought down if warring factions continued to let supplies flow into the city.

"If we can open the roads and make convoys a regular feature of life in Kabul, the price of these commodities will come down, the economy will improve and everyone will benefit," he said.

Opposition leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's forces have blocked roads to Kabul for much of this year in a power struggle with his arch-foe, President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

"We want all the roads to be opened and a permanent ceasefire announced," Mr. Hekmatyar told Reuters last week.

Asked if that meant the blockade was over, he said: "We are serious about a peaceful solution, but it's not the case for the other side. They just want to remain in power."

| JORDAN TELEVISION | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Tel: 77311-19 | |
| PROGRAMME TWO | |
| 17:00 | Pollards |
| 17:30 | Un Four Tous |
| 18:00 | Montage |
| 18:30 | Les Intepides |
| 19:00 | News in French |
| 19:15 | Ushuaia |
| 19:30 | McHale's Navy |
| 20:00 | The Phantom Horseman |
| 20:30 | Quantum Leap |
| 21:00 | Galactica |
| 21:30 | News in English |
| 22:30 | Feature film "God Father" (Part II) |
| 23:59 | The Upper Hand |
| PRAYER TIMES | |
| 04:58 | Fajr |
| 06:20 | (Sunrise) Duha |
| 11:28 | Dhuhr |
| 16:14 | Asr |
| 16:37 | Maghrib |
| 17:59 | Isha |
| CHURCHES | |
| St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifiah, Tel. 810740 | |
| Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785 | |
| St. Joseph Church Tel. 624594 | |
| Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440 | |
| De la Salle Church Tel. 661757 | |
| Terrasanta Church Tel. 622366 | |
| Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541 | |
| Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543 | |
| Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331 | |
| Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261 | |
| St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751 | |
| Armenian International Church Tel. 652526 | |
| Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328 | |
| German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 641955 | |
| The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932 | |
| Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691 | |
| The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295 | |

| JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Jordan Valley (10/20) | |
| Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 10, Aqaba 17 Humidity readings: Amman 30 per cent, Aqaba 35 per cent. | |
| USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS | |
| NIGHT DUTY | |
| AMMAN: | |
| Dr. Jamil Maraga | 776149 |
| Dr. Nidal As'ad | 751672 |
| Dr. Khalid Mu'addi | 743504 |
| Dr. Ghazi Abdullah | 884286 |
| Firas pharmacy | 661912 |
| Fordows pharmacy | 778336 |
| Al Asena pharmacy | 637055 |
| Naiwouh pharmacy | 636722 |
| Al Salam pharmacy | 636730 |
| Yacoub pharmacy | 644945 |
| Shmoisani pharmacy | 637660 |
| Naiwouh pharmacy | 636722 |
| Najih pharmacy | 847632 |
| IRBID: | |
| Dr. Ali Shogairi | 246140 |
| Akuds pharmacy | (—) |
| ZARQA: | |
| Dr. Raib Atallah | 984424 |
| Khalil pharmacy | |
| 985417 | |
| EMERGENCIES | |
| Food Control Centre | 637111 |
| Civil Defence Department | 661111 |
| Rescue | 630341 |
| Civil Defence Emergency | 199 |
| Rescue Police | 192 621111, 637777 |
| Fire Brigade | 617101 |
| Blood Bank | 775121 |
| Highway Police | 842402 |
| Traffic Police | 986390 |
| Public Security Department | 63021 |
| Police Complaints | 615800 |
| Water and Sewerage | 661176 |
| Complaints | 897467 |
| Amman Municipality | 787111 |
| Complaints | 787111 |
| Repairs | 623101 |
| Abdullah Telephone Repairs | 661101 |
| Jordan Television | 773111 |
| Radio Jordan | 774111 |
| Water Authority | 640100 |
| Jordan Electricity Authority | 815615 |
| Electric Power Company | |
| 636381 | |
| RJ Flight Information | |
| 08-53200 | |
| HOSPITALS | |
| AMMAN: | |
| Husseini Medical Centre | 813813/32 |
| Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn | 642281/6 |
| Akileh Maternity, J. Amn | 642441/2 |
| Jabal Amman Maternity | 642362 |
| Mallat, J. Amman | 636140 |
| Palestine, Shmoisani | 664171/4 |
| Shmoisani Hospital | 669131 |
| University Hospital | 845845 |
| Al-Muassir Hospital | 66727/9 |
| The Islamic, Abdali | 666127/37 |
| Al-Ahli, Abdali | 664164/6 |
| Italian, Al-Mahajreen | 77101/3 |
| Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh | 75111/26 |
| Army, Marka | 891611/15 |
| Queen Alla Hospital | 602249/50 |
| Amal Hospital | 674155 |
| ZARQA: | |
| Zarqa Govt. Hospital | (09)983323 |
| Zarqa National Hospital | (09)900560 |
| Ibn Sina Hospital | (09)986732 |
| Al Hilma Modern Hospital | (09)990990 |
| IRBID: | |
| Princess Basma Hospital | (03)275555 |
| Greek Catholic Hospital | (02)272775 |
| Al Al-Nafca Hospital | (02)247100 |
| AQABA: | |
| Princess Haya Hospital | (03)314111 |
| FOR THE TRAVELLER | |
| QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT | |
| This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (09)532000, 5, where it should always be verified. | |
| ARRIVALS | |
| Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1) | |
| 06:35 | Bangkok (RJ) |
| 07:45 | Aqaba (RJ) |
| 08:35 | Jeddah (RJ) |
| 09:00 | Damascus (RJ) |
| 09:05 | Larnaca (RJ) |
| 09:55 | Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ) |
| 10:15 | Beirut (RJ) |
| 10:15 | Doha, Bahrain (RJ) |
| 17:00 | New York, Amsterdam (RJ) |
| 17:55 | London (RJ) |
| 18:00 | Adabo (RJ) |
| 18:45 | Madrid (RJ) |
| 19:00 | Paris, Geneva (RJ) |
| 19:35 | Vienna (RJ) |
| 18:45 | Frankfurt (RJ) |
| Other Flights (Terminal 2) | |
| 12:35 | Abu Dhabi, Muscat (GF) |
| 14:25 | Moscow (SU) |
| 18:35 | Cairo (MS) |
| 22:55 | Istanbul (TK) |
| 01:10 | Amsterdam (KL) |
| DEPARTURES | |
| Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1) | |
| 06:00 | Aqaba (RJ) |
| 06:25 | Beirut (RJ) |
| 08:30 | Frankfurt (RJ) |
| 11:00 | Vienna (RJ) |
| 11:00 | Cairo (RJ) |
| 11:15 | Amsterdam, New York (RJ) |
| 11:20 | Tunis, Casablanca (RJ) |
| 11:50 | Athens (RJ) |
| 20:00 | Aqaba (RJ) |
| 20:15 | Riyadh (RJ) |
| 20:30 | Jeddah (RJ) |
| 20:45 | New Delhi (RJ) |
| 20:45 | Damascus (RJ) |
| 20:45 | Beirut (RJ) |
| 21:25 | Abu Dhabi, Doha (RJ) |
| 22:00 | Singapore, Jakarta (RJ) |
| 22:30 | Bangkok (RJ) |
| 22:35 | Sanaa (RJ) |
| Other Flights (Terminal 2) | |
| 07:10 | Rome (AZ) |
| 13:30 | Doha, Muscat (GF) |

| HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Dep. Amman | 8:00 am every Monday |
| Arr. Damascus | 10:00 pm every Monday |
| Dep. Damascus | 5:00 pm every Sunday |
| Arr. Amman | 5:00 pm every Sunday |
| MARKET PRICES | |
| Upper lower price in this per kg | |
| Apple | 100 500 |
| Banana | 600 |
| Banana (Mukammal) | 180 180 |
| Cabbage | 320 200 |
| Carrot | 240 200 |
| Cauliflower | 240 200 |
| Chamfrone | 240 200 |
| Cucumbers (large) | 240 200 |
| Cucumbers (small) | 240 200 |
| Eggplant | 240 200 |
| Garlic | 240 200 |
| Grape Fruit | 240 200 |
| Lemon | 240 200 |
| Marrow (large) | 240 200 |
| Marrow (small) | 240 200 |
| Onion (green) | 240 200 |
| Onion (dry) | 240 200 |
| Orange | 240 200 |
| Pepper (hot) | 240 200 |
| Pepper (sweet) | 240 200 |
| Potato | 240 200 |
| Radish | 240 200 |
| Squash | 240 200 |
| Tomato | 240 200 |

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Civil Defence Rescue units Saturday evening haul a metal cutter through the rubble of a building which collapsed in the Nazal suburb of Amman (Photo by Rana Hussein)

New building collapses 2 hours after completion

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Civil Defence Department (CDD) rescue units discontinued their search Saturday night for two people who were believed to have been trapped under rubble after a newly-constructed building collapsed in Nazal suburb.

A CDD official told the Jordan Times that the two Egyptian workers who were feared missing and possibly trapped under the wreckage of the five-story apartment building, appeared at the scene. Both workers were reported not to have been on the site when the building collapsed, the official added.

"The two men showed up two hours later and said they were away at the time of the collapse, but we will continue to dig in the rubble just in case someone else was in the building," the CDD official said.

An eyewitness who lives near the site said that at approximately 4:00 p.m., he saw stones falling from the building, then "all of a sudden the building just went down."

"I was standing on my balcony at the time of the incident, and my house started shaking, accompanied by loud noises," the witness told the Jordan Times.

Amman Mayor Mamdouh Al Abbadi said that the building was licensed by the Jordan Engineers Association.

Princess Basma to serve on WHO global commission on women's health

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Saturday agreed to join the Global Commission on Women's Health of the World Health Organisation (WHO) for the period 1994-95.

Princess Basma, in a written reply to WHO Director General Hiroshi Nakajima, expressed her appreciation to the organisation for selecting her to serve on the committee, stressing that she will do her utmost to achieve the committee's objectives.

The Princess last month received a letter from Dr. Nakajima inviting her to accept membership on the committee, whose establishment was recommended by WHO member states at the 45th World Health Assembly in 1992.

The Global Commission on Women's Health comprises prominent personalities from a broad range of disciplines and experiences, including political, scientific and professional leaders throughout the world.

The terms of reference of the commission involve producing an agenda for action on women's health, acquainting policy makers with women's health issues, advocating the promotion of women's health issues within all development plans and using all forms of mass media to achieve that end.

They also involve providing a forum for consultation and dialogue with women's organisations and women's health advocacy groups.

The commission meets approximately twice a year to provide independent scientific and technical advice on policies and strategies relating to women's health.

Its next meeting will take place in Australia at the beginning of April, 1995.

Princess Basma's selection to the commission's membership reflects WHO's appreciation of her role in supporting women's causes.

With this new appointment Princess Basma now serves four U.N. assignments.

In May 1993, the Princess was appointed as Honorary Human Development Ambassador by the U.N. Development Programme.

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet Saturday heard reports from Minister of Planning Hisham Khatib and Minister of Finance Sami Gammoh on the outcome of their negotiations with the European Union (EU), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

According to the reports, the European Union has agreed to give Jordan an immediate grant of \$36 million to be transferred to the Jordanian treasury before the end of the year to help Jordan's balance of payments.

The grant came as an initial response from the EU to the efforts and meetings conducted lately between EU leaders in Brussels and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan.

The reports said the IMF board has endorsed a \$57 million loan to the Kingdom in addition to an earlier sum, thus bringing the total of the IMF loan to \$110 million.

This will be a long term, low interest, soft loan and will be available during 1995, according to the reports.

In addition, the World Bank has approved a low-

interest \$80 million loan to Jordan payable over 20 years, said the reports, which added that the German government has agreed to offer Jordan a \$40 million low interest loan payable over 20 years through the World Bank.

Over and above this, Jordan will obtain a \$50 million loan from the German government during this year, the reports added.

Dr. Khatib and Mr. Gammoh told the Council of Ministers that these soft loans were designed to augment the Kingdom's foreign currency reserves cover the 1995 budget deficit and enable the government to carry out capital projects next year.

Meeting under the chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh, the Cabinet approved 18 projects which pledge to invest JD80 million in businesses that would create 2,000 jobs.

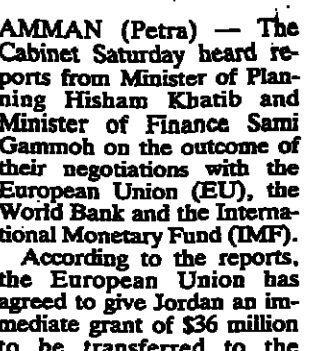
The Cabinet said that the schemes would be considered certified economic projects which are entitled to benefit from numerous incentives such as exemptions from customs duty on imported

machinery and equipment and exemptions from payment of income tax for the first two years of production.

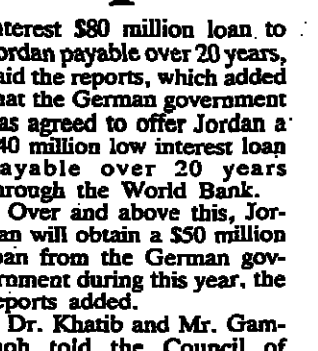
A Cabinet statement said that the new schemes would manufacture plastic materials, spare parts for machinery, containers and bottles for drugs and foodstuffs, aluminium, iron, ready-made garments, underwear, textiles vitamins, dairy products, veterinary drugs and detergents and some would provide medical and hotel management services requirements.

The Cabinet Saturday also approved the establishment of six enterprises, considered

Ministers report on talks with top financial entities



Sami Gammoh



Hisham Al Khatib

economic category projects, which are allowed fewer exemptions than certified economic projects.

These businesses would manufacture chocolates, biscuits, cartoon and documentary films, educational materials and textiles. The total funds to be invested are JD4 million; 270 jobs are to be created by these schemes, said the Cabinet statement.

The Council of Ministers endorsed a memorandum of understanding with Germany providing for DM 1.5 million (JD669,000) from the German government to finance the cost of expertise and technical assistance in assessing the Kingdom's various needs in different fields.

The Council of Ministers also agreed to exempt the Military Consumer Corporation from JD7 million in customs duty that would have been collected on the corporation's imports next year.

It also decided to form a Jordanian delegation, led by Interior Minister Salameh Hamad to take part in the Arab League interior ministers' council meeting scheduled to be held in Tunis between Jan. 4 and 6.

It approved Jordan's participation in an international tourism exhibition to be held in Milan, Italy, early next year and the Berlin International Tourism Fair in March

1995. Jordan's delegation to the two exhibitions will be led by Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Mohammad Adwan.

According to the Cabinet, Judge Adib Jalandeh, the prosecutor general, and Judge Mashour Kouj, member of the Court of Appeals, will be sent to the United States to discuss an agreement on the extradition of crime suspects between Jordan and the United States. No date was given for their trip.

The Council of Ministers delegated the secretary general of the Ministry of Planning to travel to Paris to negotiate a financial protocol for 1994 with the French government. The secretary general was authorised to sign the protocol.

The Cabinet also approved Jordan's participation in the general assembly meeting of the Federation of Arab News Agencies to be held in Beirut on Dec. 14 and 15. Jordan will be represented at the next meeting by Abdullah Etoum, director general of the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Enumerators start 1994 census 125,000 families to be visited daily

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Eight thousand enumerators commenced with a house-to-house survey of the Kingdom yesterday, thus initiating Jordan's fourth national census.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, quoted Assistant Director General of the Department of Statistics Ismail Abu Soudos as saying that the researchers will visit approximately 125,000 families daily out of an estimated 625,000 families in Jordan.

Last night, enumerators visited group families (those staying in hotels, hospitals or homes for the disabled) and also surveyed those entering the Kingdom at the airport. All visitors who arrived in Jordan before midnight Saturday were registered in the census. Last night was also the night that residents were supposed to have recorded the number of people sleeping in their homes.

According to a statistics department official, the census will count foreigners living in Jordan as well as

Jordanians living abroad for less than a year (for example, those travelling or studying abroad or those travelling on business).

Although plans for the census have been under way since 1991, some have criticised the census as being politically motivated given the recent political developments in Jordan.

Critics say that the census seeks to define the number of refugees in the Kingdom in order to seek compensation in the peace talks, or may determine the number of Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin — a controversial issue that has been generally avoided since the signing of the peace treaty with Israel.

But, according to Abdulrahman Al-Zoubi, executive director of the 1994 census, the only objective of the census is to establish the number of inhabitants in each governorate so as to facilitate policy-making and planning.

"It is only natural that the government should want such statistics," he said. "The government has

to study migration trends, which is important in a place like Jordan where the population has increased significantly over short periods of time."

Jordan, in fact, has one of the highest population growth rates in the world, much of which is a result of an influx of refugees and displaced persons during the last five decades.

The Kingdom's last national census was in 1979, showing a population of nearly 2,150,000. Today, however, the population is estimated at just over 4 million — ten per cent of which are figured to be returnees from the Gulf states following the 1990-91 Gulf crisis.

Information and results of the census will be valuable to several ministries: education, labour, planning, social development and others.

The census will also help planners and sociologists study fertility and mortality rates by governorate, as well as other demographic information such as the status of handicapped and disabled people.

Amnesty branch to hold workshop on preparing human rights courses

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordanian branch of Amnesty International (AI) plans to organise a workshop towards the end of December to discuss prospects for the introduction of human rights courses in the curricula of schools and universities, according to Tawfiq Abu Baker, Jordan AI secretary general.

Addressing a press conference Saturday, Mr. Abu Baker said that about 12 human rights specialists from Jordanian universities are expected to address the workshop, which is expected to formulate a related set of recommendations.

"Once we have reached a set of recommendations we intend to submit a plan for the introduction of the human rights courses into the curricula to the Norwegian branch of Amnesty International and request financial

assistance from them to implement the plan," said Mr. Abu Baker.

The Norwegian branch is known to have helped other countries in implementing similar plans, including Tunisia, where such programmes are already in place, Mr. Abu Baker said.

The Jordanian AI branch, which formally was licensed to operate in 1992, has been conducting several activities including regular lectures on human rights issues for senior officers of the Public Security Department (PSD), a programme which is expected to expand to include officers in charge of prisons and traffic, according to Mr. Abu Baker.

Referring to Jordan's human rights performance, Mr. Abu Baker said that so far, the country has endorsed 28 international human rights agreements, but the Jordanian AI branch has been working to ensure that the Kingdom endorse the remaining 17 agreements.

"We have approached Parliament members urging them to act towards ensuring the Kingdom's endorsement of the remaining international agreements," said Mr. Abu Baker.

But Jordan is considered among the foremost Arab states to sign international human rights agreements, he said.

Referring to the work of Amnesty International, he said that the London-based group, which was established in 1961, now comprises 1.2 million members in 41 countries. He said they conduct their work without political bias.

Adding that AI groups continue to face harassment in some Arab states, Mr. Abu Baker said that Jordan was an exception because here, Amnesty International receives all the facilities and help it needs for its work.

Commitment to human rights seems to be moving backwards instead of forwards, according to some observers.

Discussions on human rights have therefore taken on a renewed urgency within international and national agendas.

For this reason, the International Movement of Rights and Humanity, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) has organised a three-day, multi-faith, multi-cultural roundtable in Amman this week in cooperation with the Jordanian Institute of Democracy.

Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the round table provides a forum in which Islamic and Western delegates to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights can explore their specific

Government urges JPRC to provide more gas cylinders

Ministry reviews gas storage safety measures

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government Saturday urged the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company (JPRC) to increase its daily provisions of gas cylinders from 300 to 500.

The decision, taken at a meeting chaired by Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Tala' Ureikat, came less than 24 hours after an explosion at a gas storage facility near the Sports City neighbourhood destroyed about 1000 gas cylinders.

The government also passed several measures concerning the bottling of gas, prevention of price manipulation and setting guidelines for ensuring greater storage safety and distribution processes, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Noting that the JPRC lately imported 50,000 additional cylinders to meet recent shortages, the government said that each cylinder sells for JD18.5 to consumers and the gas to fill the average cylinder is to be sold for no more than JD2, stressing that the distributors will be working extra hours in order to ensure wider distribution of the much needed energy source.

Meanwhile, the Civil Defence Department (CDD) reported Saturday that investigations into the causes of the explosions Friday evening near the Sports City, which caused extensive fires at two storage facilities were still under way.

A CDD official said that only one person sustained

light injuries from the explosions. He was discharged from hospital Saturday after treatment.

The official told the Jordan Times that CDD inspection teams were at the site all day Saturday in order to determine the cause of the explosions.

The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources plans another meeting soon to follow up and decide on safer warehouse storage of gas cylinders and the location of such facilities.

The meeting was attended by CDD Director General Lieutenant General Afif Ghoul, as well as the director of the JPRC, the president of the distributors of fuel, and several concerned officials.

Islamic, Western delegates explore commitments to human rights

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Despite sweeping worldwide political changes that many countries hoped would lead to democracy and stabilisation, the issue of human rights has been pushed to the forefront of the international agenda.

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Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the round table provides a forum in which Islamic and Western delegates to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights can explore their specific

commitments to human rights.

"As we approach the bi-millennium of the birth of Christ," said the Crown Prince in a speech delivered on his behalf by Senator Kamal Abu Jaber, "and the tri-millennium celebrations of the holy city of Jerusalem, we must realise that these anniversaries will be devoid of meaning unless we can find a shared value system, and a shared notion of moral authority, by which to govern our shared, but single world."

More than any technological advances or economic growth, the world needs a global consensus on human rights, he said.

Three panel discussions will cover the legal and political dimensions of human rights, religious and socio-cultural aspects as well as media and public perceptions of human rights.

Other working groups will discuss the promotion of multi-faith understanding of human rights, and the contribution of culture in promoting international tolerance and strengthening international human rights laws and commitment to human rights.

More than 30 delegates are to participate in the three-day conference.

The roster boasts an array of participants from around the world including Indonesia, the United States, Tunisia, the United Kingdom and other countries.

Jordan is represented at the roundtable by Mohammad Adnan Al Bakhit, president of AL al Bayt University, Mazen Armouti, president of the Institute of Democracy, Mohammad Tawfiq Al Khalidi, director of the Legal Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Awn Khasawneh, legal advisor to the Crown Prince and member of the International Board of Rights and Humanity, Musa Keilani, editor-in-chief of Al Dastour and former ambassador to Bahrain, Naela Rashdan, Upper House parliamentarian, Kamel Al Sharif, former minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Nabeel Talhouni, director of International Organisations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Mohammad Tarawneh, deputy president of the Arab Organisation of Human Rights.

WHAT'S GOING ON

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| <p>FILM</p> <p>★ Film entitled "The Sword in the Stone" at the American Center at 5:00 p.m.</p> <p>CONCERT</p> <p>★ Concert at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.</p> <p>LECTURES</p> <p>★ Lecture entitled "The Excavations of the Umayyad Palace, Amman Citadel" by Dr. Muhammad Najjar, Dr. Antonio Almogro, and Mr. Pedro Jemilis at the Friends of Archaeology (FoA) Center at 7:00 p.m. (The lecture precedes a field trip to the Umayyad Palace organised by the FoA on Dec. 16).</p> <p>★ Lecture (in Arabic) entitled "The Palestinian Legal Drama...Where To?" by Mr. Raja' Shhadeh of Palestine at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 6:00 p.m.</p> <p>EXHIBITIONS</p> <p>★ Exhibition of home furnishings and furniture entitled "Colours and Crafts" at the</p> | <p>Queen Alia Fund for Social Development new offices, Al Madina Al Munawara Street.</p> <p>★ Exhibition of portraits by Fahrelnissa Zeid and the exhibition of contemporary Arab artist at Darat Al Funun.</p> <p>★ Exhibition of oil paintings by Salman Abbas at Alla Art Gallery.</p> <p>★ Exhibition of abstract by several artists at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art.</p> <p>★ Exhibition of paintings by Ismail and Tammam Shammout at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation.</p> <p>★ Exhibition of Muna Saadi's private collection of contemporary arts and Jordanian antiquities at Abdoun Village (Tel 829700).</p> <p>★ Exhibition of paintings by Sadik Kwaish at the French Cultural Centre.</p> <p>★ Exhibition by Akram Naji Shaker at Ab'ad Art Gallery.</p> <p>★ Exhibition of paintings by Dr. Ali Al Ghoul at the Italian Language Centre (Tel. 669348).</p> <p>★ Exhibition by artists Latiff Al Khateeb and Mubay Khateeb at the Housing Bank Gallery.</p> |
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'Lack of funding, equipment hinders research in Jordan'

By Ian Atalla
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan's scientific researchers are as well-trained and qualified as their counterparts in industrialised countries, and it is a lack of funding and equipment rather than a lack of skills and know-how which hinders efforts to develop internationally competitive research programmes in the Kingdom, a foreign expert claimed Saturday.

"A lot of knowledge is there," Wolfgang Voelter of Germany's Tübingen University told the Jordan Times. But, he maintained, spending extensive money and effort to send science specialists abroad for study at "top-notch foreign institutions, is not paying off if the infrastructure is not there for them when they

come back to work."

Dr. Voelter spoke after a week of meetings with Jordanian officials to conclude arrangements for a cooperative research venture between Tübingen University and three major Jordanian institutions — the Royal Scientific Society (RSS), and Jordan and Yarmouk universities.

The initiative is one of several between Jordanian research departments and European universities being funded by a 3.5 million European Currency Units (ECU) (JD 2.94 million) grant from the European Union (EU). It's main focus will be on the development of biochemical products.

Dr. Voelter said that from what he had seen during his visit, he was guardedly optimistic that ongoing Jordanian efforts

to beef up public sector research and development programmes would come to pay off in the future. However, "funding by the government does not appear to be optimal, and it needs to be increased," even though public sector money for scientific research might not be as comfortably available as it would be in Western countries, he said.

Over the past decade, the government has established several new scientific bodies in an effort to build up public sector research and development. Most important of them is the Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST).

Established in 1987, its role is to be the main decision-making body for public sector research and development efforts.

Other new institutions include the National Centre for Agricultural Research and Technology Transfer (NCARTT) in Al Baqaa, established in 1985, and the nascent National Information Centre, launched in 1993.

But scientists have repeatedly noted that lack of available funding continues to be a constraint on planning and execution of individual research and development projects as well as equipment purchases.

Dr. Voelter also expressed his opinion that those in the EU looking into aid for infrastructure building on the West Bank must "do something fundamental, and soon," to assist scientists working at Palestinian universities and research centres there.

He said a visit to Al Najah National University in Nablus during a trip to

the West Bank last Thursday had convinced him that although Palestinian scientists, like their Jordanian counterparts, were extremely well-trained by international standards, their situation was dire.

From what he had observed, he said, there was an extreme lack of scientific equipment and facilities, as well as a crippling lack of freedom for travel abroad to attend important international conferences and workshops, because of the political situation in the West Bank.

As well, he said, "from inside the West Bank, they (scientists) are not able to access the international institutions which might give them funding."

Dr. Voelter said he also met with Minister of Higher Education Rabea Saoud during his visit to Jordan.

NIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

MARRI PRICES

India's Rao humiliated in state polls

NEW DELHI (R) — Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's Congress Party suffered a stinging setback Saturday in state polls that raised questions about the pace of free-market reforms and his prospects in 1996 general elections.

Congress, which had controlled all four states holding polls, lost its hold on three of them and was neck and neck with the opposition in the fourth.

The party, which has ruled India for all but three years since independence in 1947, was crushed in Mr. Rao's home state of Andhra Pradesh as well as in neighbouring Karnataka, by far the largest electoral prizes.

The prime minister's party had held overwhelming majorities in both southern states since the last elections in 1989.

The state elections have no direct impact on the party's wafer-thin parliamentary majority in the capital New Delhi. Pre-poll surveys showed voters were swayed

mostly by local issues and generally were not taking aim at Mr. Rao.

But the losses were significant because the south has provided Mr. Rao with his power base since he took office in 1991 and launched a far-reaching economic liberalisation programme.

"Congress does not exist in the north and it has been routed in the south," said the chief minister of the eastern state of Orissa, Biju Patnaik, of the centrist Janata Dal Party.

Mr. Rao's economic reforms have opened up India's markets, delighting foreign investors but bringing increased competition and hardship to many industries.

Congress leaders were set to meet in Delhi Saturday evening to take stock of the defeat.

"Our performance is simply shattering," Commerce Minister Pranab Mukherjee said.

In Andhra Pradesh, Congress was routed by the regional Telugu Desam Party

(TDP). Congress, which had held a 182-seat majority, had clinched only 14 seats to TDP's 160.

TDP chief N.T. Rama Rao wasted no time announcing he would immediately impose state-wide prohibition against all alcohol. Local businessmen said the ban, supported by women activists, would cost the state government \$250 million in excise levies.

"This will send a wrong signal to foreign investors," an official with a Delhi-based liquor factory said.

With all but one of 224 seats decided in Karnataka, the opposition Janata Dal had clinched 115.

Congress, which had held a 178-seat majority in the state, was running third with only 35 seats behind the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) 40.

Congress also lost control of the small northeastern state of Sikkim, and was in a dead heat in the southern state of Goa.

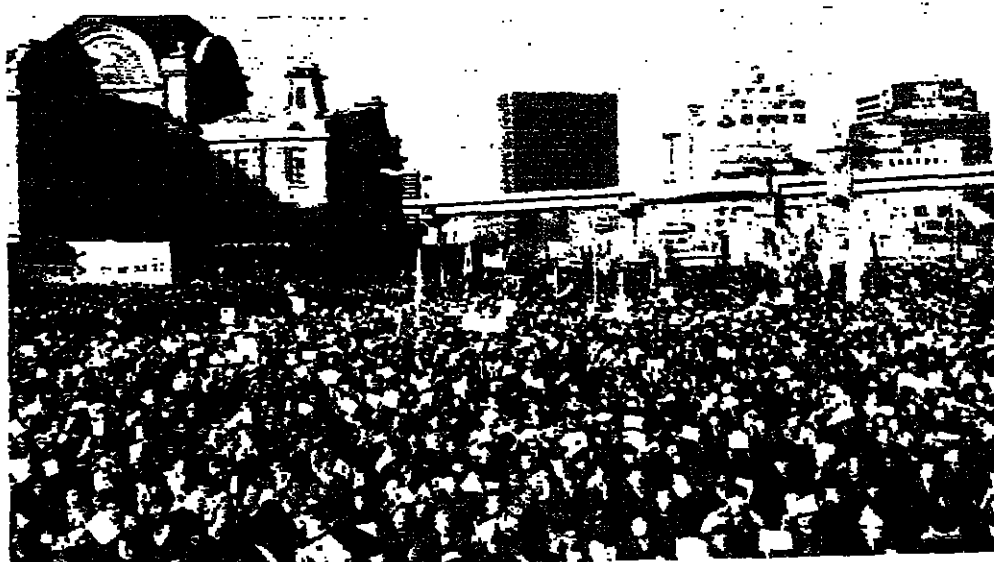
"The southern debacle is expected to weaken the prime minister, making new initiatives or controversial decisions much more difficult," the Indian Express said.

A major question mark now looms against his (Rao's) ability to win the 1996 general election," the Economic Times said in an editorial. Elections in five other states are set for February.

Business leaders said Mr. Rao would probably not reverse his liberalisation drive but with fresh elections due in five states next February and general polls in 1996, it could stall.

"They (reforms) have already slowed down," said R.C. Bhargava, managing director of car maker Maruti Udyog.

Some critics were quick to point the finger of blame at Finance Minister Manmohan Singh, who has spearheaded the liberalisation drive. "It was all Manmohan's fault," read a front-page headline in the Asian Age.



Demonstrators stage a protest in front of Seoul railway station Saturday against the failure to indict two former generals-turned president in a 1979 coup. South Korean radical students hurled firebombs into a prosecution building and a ruling party office urging immediate punishment of the two former presidents Chun Doo-Hwan and Roh Tae-Woo (AFP photo)

S. Korean farmers, dissidents stage violent protests in towns

SEOUL (AFP) — Thousands of students and farmers staged violent protests Saturday in South Korea against ratification of a world free trade accord and for punishment of two former presidents for their role in a 1979 coup, witnesses and reports said.

"Reject the trade accord," the protesters shouted in street protests in Seoul and two other provincial cities, referring to the agreement reached under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

At least 15 people were injured in the southern opposition stronghold of Chunju when riot police blocked a march by some 1,200 farmers and students, said the Yonhap News Agency.

The demonstrators in Chunju hurled rocks, driving

50 vehicles through police barricades, Yonhap said.

They also demanded the government retract its attempt to railroad ratification of the GATT bill through parliament without proper measures and to protect the nation's crumbling agriculture industry, it said.

In Seoul, some 1,000 students staged running protests, chased by officers who sprayed tear gas, after an anti-government rally with opposition party supporters, witnesses said.

"Indict the rebels," the students in Seoul shouted, urging the immediate punishment of former generals-turned-president Chun Doo-Hwan and Roh Tae-Woo for their role in a 1979 coup.

The Seoul rally was sponsored by the main opposition group, the Democratic Party, which returned to parliament

Monday after a month-long boycott launched when prosecutors decided in October not to indict the two former presidents.

Mr. Chun and Mr. Roh have been found guilty of leading the 1979 mutiny that brought Mr. Chun to power.

The ruling camp has vowed to have parliament ratify the GATT bill before the year's end, buoyed by public polls favouring the government's liberalisation blueprint.

The global accord would create a new trade order under the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and would force open South Korea's markets for foreign products.

Radicals also attacked a prosecution building and a ruling party office early Saturday, slamming President Kim Young-Sam's government for bowing to outside trade pressure.

Nujoma, SWAPO win Namibia landslide

WINDHOEK (R) — President Sam Nujoma and his ruling SWAPO swept to easy victory Saturday in Namibia's first post-independence elections, heading for a majority big enough to allow the party to re-write the constitution.

With only one out of 95 counting centres still to declare results, SWAPO had 70.6 per cent, the main opposition Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) 21.9 per cent and the United Democratic Front (UDF) 2.8 per cent.

DTA Vice-President Katurire Kaura, saying voting had been largely along tribal lines, conceded defeat. "I am conceding defeat as we are heading for a tribal democracy," he told Reuters.

Final results are not expected until Monday when postal ballots are counted but the SWAPO lead is unassailable, giving the party the authority to re-write the 1990 independence constitution.

Political analysts said they

expected SWAPO to end with about 50 seats in the 72-member parliament, compared to the 42 it now holds.

The DTA, which holds 21, was expected to hang on to about 17 and the UDF to have the balance. Smaller opposition parties did not make the one per cent threshold needed for parliament.

In the presidential race Mr. Nujoma, leader of the pre-1990 struggle for independence from neighbouring South Africa, held 71.7 per cent of the vote against 25.5 per cent for the DTA's Mshaka Myungo, his only opponent.

SWAPO wants a two-thirds majority in parliament to re-write the constitution and enable Mr. Nujoma to serve a third term.

Mr. Nujoma believes the existing constitution favours the opposition parties.

In some northern constituencies SWAPO polled more than 94 per cent of the

vote.

There is little to separate the main parties politically but each draws its support from different ethnic and tribal groupings in Namibia. The formerly Marxist SWAPO has its power base among the majority Owambo tribe.

Political scientist Andre Du Pisani told state television: "The loyalty towards the (SWAPO) party and the personality is very evident in the north... the country must prepare for SWAPO's two-thirds majority."

Mr. Nujoma led SWAPO in a 23-year bush war against South African rule of the huge desert territory, twice the size of France. Independence was agreed in a deal linked to the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola.

Officials said indications were that 55 to 65 per cent of the 650,000 registered voters had cast ballots, compared to a 90 per cent turn-out in the 1989 pre-independence vote.

Chiapas mediators warn of civil war in Mexico

SAN CRISTOBAL DE LAS CASAS, Mexico (R) — Mediators seeking peace between Mexico's government and peasant guerrillas warned that the country is on the brink of civil war and called on the army to ease its pressure on the rebels.

The National Intermediation Commission said late Friday that the southern state of Chiapas, where so-called Zapatista rebels this week threatened fresh military attacks to end an 11-month-old ceasefire, was close to exploding into violence.

Mexico is in danger of a civil war," said the commission, which is led by peace mediator Bishop Samuel Ruiz and several other dignitaries.

In their statement, the commission members urged the government to cut its military and political pressure on the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), which launched its rebellion for democracy and indigenous rights on Jan. 1.

"Priority should be given to breaking the military circle around the EZLN and to a policy that does not look to take away (the Zapatistas') social support as part of a counter-insurgency war," they said.

Opposition leader Amado Avendano swore in Thursday as "rebel governor," pledging to set up a rival administration for Chiapas's majority indigenous population and lead a civil resistance movement making the state ungovernable for the elected Governor Eduardo Robledo.

Mr. Avendano urged villages where he had the Zapatistas have strong support to stop paying taxes to the state government, instead contributing directly to his rival administration.

Japan's new opposition unfurls its flag

YOKOHAMA, Japan (R) — Japan's newest and largest opposition party unfurled a reformist flag in its inaugural convention Saturday, calling for a "third opening" of the country to the world.

"We must take off the old coat of parties that worked only for the benefit of a small group of people," party head Toshiaki Kaifu, a popular prime minister from 1989 to 1991, told the gala launch of the New Frontier Party (NFP).

Mr. Kaifu and his deputy Ichiro Ozawa said the NFP should spearhead radical reforms in political, social and economic structures similar to the fundamental changes that had previously swept Japan.

When referring to 1854 when the United States forced open Japan from the three centuries of isolation and 1945 when America introduced democracy after World War II.

Party officials chose Yokohama for the event because it was Japan's first modern port city to be opened to the world.

"We will support the government as long as they keep up with correct reforms," said Mr. Kaifu.

"But if not, well we can surely replace them," he said to cheers and loud applause.

from the 6,000 party delegates.

In a race against fellow ex-Premier Tsutomu Hata, Mr. Kaifu was elected last Thursday to head the new party, formed by a merger of nine non-Communist opposition parties.

The NFP becomes Japan's second largest party with 180 lawmakers in the 511-seat lower house. The largest party is the 300-strong Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), senior partner in an unwieldy coalition with Prime Minister Tomichi Murayama's Socialist Party.

Mr. Kaifu and Mr. Ozawa are ex-LDP men fighting to bring down their old party.

In an interview in Saturday's Asahi Shimbun, a confident Kaifu called on Mr. Murayama to dissolve parliament for early general elections, not scheduled until mid-1997.

"The Murayama government has not been baptised through elections and has violated campaign platform," Mr. Kaifu said in the interview. "He should ask the people to make a judgement at the earliest possible date."

On Friday, Mr. Murayama rejected calls for early elections because he said the nation could not afford a political vacuum with pressing domestic and foreign policy issues to be solved.

The introduction of a single-seat electoral system spurred the formation of the new combined opposition party because the new system works against parties in campaign funding.

The NFP convention opened with a 20-minute rendition of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Song Of Joy, performed by a full orchestra and a 300-member chorus.

Hi-tech displays of the party logo, a ship's steering wheel, and a giant television screen gave more colour than is usual to a Japanese political convention.

Mr. Kaifu said the two main pillars of the new party were "continuous reforms" and "responsible politics."

He cited two alarming issues facing the nation.

The first was the bullying suicide of a 13-year-old boy and the second a recent report ranking productivity among nations — Japan had kept the top position for eight years but gave it up to the United States and now ranks third, beaten also by Singapore.

"There is a growing concern about education and productivity," Mr. Kaifu said. "Our duty is to address this."

Christmas manuscript sells for \$255,000

NEW YORK (AP) — A single sheet of paper bearing a handwritten copy of the classic poem that begins "Twas the night before Christmas" sold Friday for \$255,000 at Christie's auction house. Author Clement Clarke Moore left just three copies of the poem written in his own hand. This version was written in 1860 when he was 81. Moore had transcribed the copy at the request of an admirer, cramming all 56 lines onto one small sheet in his tiny, perfect handwriting. Moore wrote the poem — formally titled A Visit From St. Nicholas — in 1822. Legend has it that the idea came to him while he was out buying a turkey for his wife to roast on Christmas Eve and give to the poor of the local parish. Christie's had estimated that the manuscript, written in brown ink, would sell for between \$70,000 and \$90,000. A Bidding war drove the price up and the victor, entrepreneur Ralph Gadiel, said he was determined to have it at any price. Gadiel, whose Illinois-based International Resourcing Services Company sells gifts and collectibles, plans to market a limited edition of copies of the manuscript next Christmas.

Gay German lawmaker seeks to marry partner

BONN (AFP) — A gay German lawmaker wants to marry the man he has been living with for two-and-a-half years and has requested a civil ceremony marriage licence from the city of Cologne, the German daily Bild said Saturday. "My partner is French. I love him and I want to marry him," 33-year-old Volker Beck told Bild. Mr. Beck, who was elected on Oct. 16 as a candidate of the Green Party, is the first openly gay deputy in the German parliament. He said his demand for a marriage licence had been turned down. "I am a single man against my own wishes," Mr. Beck told Bild. "If I was hospitalised for a serious illness, my partner would not have the right to visit me or take a decision on whether I should be operated on in an emergency situation," he said. "If the signatory to a lease agreement dies, the bereaved has no right to stay in the house and has to leave," he added. Bild, Germany's top selling daily, estimates the number of homosexuals in Germany at 3.2 million, put at two million gay men and 1.2 million gay women. So far, no homosexuals have managed to marry in Germany, but several couples have placed complaints before the constitutional court demanding the right. Among the most famous are television personality Hella von Sinnen and her partner Cornelia Scheel, daughter of former federal President Walter Scheel.

Body branding gains in popularity

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — They call it "slash and burn": One second's exposure to white-hot metal for a lasting scar and, presumably, lasting satisfaction. It's called body branding, and it joins piercing as the latest in personal statements. "With tattooing you're getting something embedded in your skin. But with branding, it's bringing out something that's already there — it's more natural," said Adam Huffman, who pierces skin at a New York shop and has twin scars branded on his forearms. "The pain" "It's actually kind of soothing," Mr. Huffman, 22, said. "It's a very good feeling where the works, gets only one branding customer every month or two, usually men in their mid-20s. The real action, he said, is on the west coast. In San Francisco, most professional branding is done in two shops where perforating noses, lips and more private parts are still the principal business. Three to six customers a week show up in search of a more permanent — and more painful — statement, said the owner of nomad body piercing. He goes by the single name of Blake. While most of the clientele are white and between 20 and 40, branding began in the 1930s and 1940s among black college fraternities, especially in the south. Mr. Blake said, "It's not a new thing — anyone who watches Monday night football has seen it," he said. "It's a hard-core right of passage."



File picture showing Joycelyn Elders testifying source Committee during her confirmation before the Senate Labour and Human Resources Committee (AFP photo)

White House denies Brown resigning

WASHINGTON (R) — The White House Friday denied reports that Commerce Secretary Ron Brown planned to resign.

A White House spokeswoman, responding to a report on Kyodo News Service that U.S. Ambassador Walter Mondale telling Japanese government officials that Mr. Brown planned to resign, said, "that is just inaccurate."

"Ron Brown just the other day said he had no plans to resign from the administration. He said he considers his job the best job in Washington," she said.

Kyodo News Service said Mr. Mondale gave the information Friday night to Yoshiro Mori, secretary-general of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the largest of Japan's three ruling parties.

Elders resigns

Meanwhile, Joycelyn Elders was forced to resign as U.S. Surgeon General Friday for suggesting schools should teach about masturbation. She was the first black American to hold that post.

As America's top public health official, her outspoken views on sexuality earned her the undying enmity of many Christians and conservatives. In addition, her uncompromising promotion of abortion rights, sex education and condom distribution in schools made her a favourite villain of the Republican Party and an issue in last month's congressional elections.

Other unguarded comments lauding homosexual adoption and suggesting the govern-

ment consider possible legislation of drugs outraged many people beyond the right-wing spectrum as well, turning Mrs. Elders into a liability for President Bill Clinton.

It was yet another off-the-cuff remark earlier this month, suggesting that children might be taught in school about masturbation, that led to her downfall.

"(With) regard to masturbation, I think that is something that is a part of human sexuality and it's part of something that perhaps should be taught" as a means of diverting youngsters from riskier forms of sex, she said at a meeting on world AIDS day at the United Nations on Dec. 1.

U.S. gay groups immediately leapt to Mrs. Elders' defence.

"It's a chilling development," said Donald Suggs, a spokesperson for the Gay Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD).

"Elders had an obligation to be forthcoming on such issues. It's really chilling that she'd lose her job for focusing on this vital issue," said Mr. Suggs, whose group promotes fair representation of gays and lesbians in the media.

Daniel Wolfe of the Gay Mens' Health Crisis, the largest AIDS service in the United States, told Reuters that Mrs. Elders' remarks were "uncomfortable and embarrassing. But they were also lifesaving."

"Our fear about all of this is that it will make all other government leaders less likely to speak out frankly about the difficult truth of AIDS. The fact is that masturbation

is an activity that does not put you at risk for HIV," said Mr. Wolfe.

Mrs. Elders' life in many ways has been an inspiring story of how intelligence and guts could overcome bad circumstances.

Born in Arkansas to the family of a sharecropper in 1933, Mrs. Elders as a child had to walk five miles (eight km) to and from her segregated school. She never saw a doctor until her first year of college.

Aged 15, she received a scholarship from the United Methodist Church to attend Philander Smith College in Little Rock, an all black school. Three years later, she entered the U.S. army as a lieutenant and in 1956 enrolled in the University of Arkansas Medical School on the GI Bill, becoming only the second black woman to graduate.

Mrs. Elders had become a distinguished pediatrician with 150 articles to her name when she was appointed by then-Governor Bill Clinton as director of the Arkansas Department of Health in 1987.

She soon found herself at the centre of controversy by creating school-based health clinics that dispensed contraceptives on demand. Opponents called her "condom queen" and "director of the Arkansas holocaust" for her advocacy of abortion rights.

Appointed Surgeon General in 1993, Mrs. Elders told the Senate during confirmation hearings she wanted to change the behaviour and attitudes of Americans towards health by putting prevention first.

Chinese town grieves as it buries its children

BEIJING (R) — Thousands grieved in China's northwest oil town of Karamay Saturday, standing in falling snow to mourn a generation as they buried more of the 300 children burned to death in China's worst fire in 15 years.

"The whole city is immersed in grief," a local official, who refused to be identified, said by telephone. "For this town this is a disaster that has drowned all hope."

"Karamay will not recover from this sorrow for years — how can we even think of passing the Chinese New Year festival?"

China's deadliest fire in 15 years raged through the Friendship Hall Cinema in Karamay, near the border with the former Soviet Union, Thursday evening when it was packed with more than 900 people, including at least 300 schoolchildren performing in and watching a cultural show.

Officials said 311 people, mostly children, were killed and 225 injured, but added they were unable to give an exact death toll because many parents took the bodies of their children home immediately to mourn.

The youngest to die were eight years old.

Hospitals said 78 of the injured were in critical condition with 11 unlikely to survive.

Three children had burns over 90 per cent of their bodies, a doctor said.

More than 10,000 of Karamay's 220,000 residents turned out in silence Friday for funerals of about 80 children from families of the local Muslim Uighur minority whose custom is not to allow the dead to spend a night unburied, the official said.

On Saturday, the town mourned under driving snow as families buried more children, the cream of Karamay's primary and secondary schools who had been chosen to present a cultural performance to a visiting education inspection team, he said.

"The scene at the cinema and the funerals is so horrible that people cannot even bear to look — we cannot bear to look at the bodies," he said.

The fire — the second to break out in the cinema since it was refurbished two years ago — began with sparks from an apparent electrical fault that set alight curtains, he said.

When frightened children tried to leave their seats to escape the smoke, they were ordered to remain sitting and maintain discipline, the official said.

Most victims were pupils from two primary schools and a secondary school sitting in

the front rows who were engulfed in flames when a ball of fire erupted from the smoking curtains and exploded into the auditorium, witnesses said. Then the ceiling crashed down, newspapers said.

All but one of the doors were padlocked and iron bars blocked the windows. Most of the bodies were found piled near the only exit, a witness said.

"These babies were our very best, they were chosen from the model classes," the official said, his voice breaking with rage.

A teacher plunged three times into the blazing hall to bring out children. He did not come out on his fourth trip.

Surviving children emerged in shock.

One was national piano prodigy Yang Liu, the official said.

"I hate this inspection team," he quoted Yang as saying after the disaster. "As soon as they came they made us sing and dance for them."

State Council Deputy Secretary Fu Zhijiang flew to the town in Xinjiang province, about 300 kilometres northwest of the provincial capital of Urumqi, where oilfields provide employment for 90 per cent of residents.

"If the government does

not handle this properly, the local people will not accept it," the official said. Residents were gripped by fury and despair as the government imposed a total blackout on details of the calamity and police cordoned off hospitals, preventing even parents from entering, he said.

Xinjiang has a history of ethnic unrest among its Uighur minority population.

"They won't even tell us how many are dead," he said.

He said no attention had been paid to an earlier, small fire in the cinema, and accused the government of negligence.

"All those in charge of security and safety — the director, deputy director and deputy Communist Party secretary are abroad. Who knows if they have returned."

The Karamay blaze comes just two weeks after a burning newspaper tossed onto a sofa at a birthday party transformed a dance hall in northeastern Liaoning province into an inferno in which 233 young weekend revellers died.

The State Council (cabinet) issued an emergency directive ordering utmost importance for fire prevention measures and immediate closure of substandard establishments.

Christmas manuscript sells for \$255,000

NEW YORK (AP) — A single sheet of paper bearing a handwritten copy of the classic poem that begins "Twas the night before Christmas" sold for \$255,000 at Christie's auction house on Friday.

The manuscript, written in 1822 by Clement Clarke Moore, was one of three copies of the poem written in his own hand. The version was written in 1822 when he was 81. Moore had transferred the copy at the request of an admirer, a young man, to his own collection of small sheets in his tiny, perfect handwriting. Moore wrote the poem formally titled "A Visit From St. Nicholas" in 1822.

Legend has it that the idea came to him while he was out buying a turkey for his wife to roast on Christmas Eve and gave to the poet of the local parish. Christie's had estimated that the manuscript, written in brown ink, would sell for between \$70,000 and \$90,000.

A bidding war drove the price up and the victor, a entrepreneur, Ralph Gubler, said he was determined to have it at any price. Gubler, whose Illinois-based International Resource Services Company sells gifts and collectibles, plans to market a limited edition of copies of the manuscript next Christmas.

Gay German lawmaker seeks to marry partner

BONN (AP) — A German lawmaker wants to marry the man he has been living with for two-and-a-half years and has requested a ceremony in Bonn.

The lawmaker, Hans-Joachim Lauth, is a member of the Bundestag, Germany's parliament. He is the first openly gay member of the Bundestag.

Lauth, 43, is a member of the Social Democratic Party (SPD). He has been living with his partner, a man named Hans-Joachim Lauth, for two-and-a-half years.

Lauth said he wanted to marry his partner because he loves him and wants to be with him for the rest of his life. He said he was not asking for special treatment, but for the same rights as other citizens.

The Bundestag is expected to vote on Lauth's request in the coming weeks. If approved, it would be a landmark decision for Germany.



Chechen soldiers stand next to the eternal flame of a World War II memorial during a mid-day prayer on a frosty day in the main square in Grozny as the tensions between the breakaway Republic of Chechnya and Russia go on (AFP)

Jets bomb Chechnya as Russia seals its borders

GROZNY, Russia (Agencies) — Planes bombed sites near the Chechen capital Grozny Saturday as tension in the rebel region reached new, dangerous highs.

Russia's ITAR-TASS news agency said the Russian government was sealing off the Chechen borders and closing its airspace.

"The Russian government today ordered the Interior Ministry to seal off the borders with Chechnya and the Defence Ministry to seal off the airspace of this republic," TASS said.

It said the decision was taken in accordance with a

decree issued by President Boris Yeltsin Friday. This authorised the cabinet to use all possible means to regain control of the rebel region.

Chechnya, a mountainous area on Russia's southern rim, declared independence in 1991.

Russia has been building up troops on the Chechen borders for the last two weeks, since the region's Moscow-backed opposition failed to seize Grozny and oust separatist Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudayev.

Saturday's air raid was the latest in a series since the abortive opposition assault.



Chechen soldiers sit on top of an armoured personnel carrier that was brought in to guard the presidential palace in the main square in Grozny (AFP photo)

At least nine people have died in previous attacks but there were no initial reports of casualties from Saturday's raid.

The raid was in two stages, starting at around 6 p.m. (1000 GMT).

First a high altitude bomber made four passes high over Grozny and a Russian correspondent heard loud explosions from the town of Argun, 15 kilometres south-east of the Chechen capital. A thick cloud of black smoke rose up from the town.

Two low-flying jets appeared minutes after the bomber, firing at least one missile towards a residential area some two kilometres from the centre. The missile hit an apartment block, but did not explode.

Chechen anti-aircraft forces responded with a barrage of fire from light and heavy anti-aircraft guns. Armed men in the square below the presidential palace unleashed round after round of bullets from Kalashnikov weapons, but the planes flew on.

"The situation in Grozny had been tense throughout the day.

Few people could be seen on the streets of the town of some 400,000 people, except near the central presidential palace where about 1,000 people have been holding a non-stop rally to support Mr. Dudayev.

Mr. Yeltsin has sent Defence Minister Pavel Grachev and Interior Minister Viktor Yerin to North Ossetia, a region bordering Chechnya in the north Caucasus where most of the big military force flown in over the last 10 days is massed.

They joined counter-intelligence chief Sergei Stepashin and Deputy Prime Minister Nikolai Yegorov,

Bosnian Serbs free hostages; ease confrontation with U.N.

SARAJEVO (R) — Bosnian Serb forces eased their confrontation with the United Nations Saturday, freeing scores of U.N. hostages and allowing a food convoy to reach Sarajevo.

But the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) warned that some of its duties, such as anti-sniper patrols in the capital and armoured escorts for aid convoys, would grind to a halt unless the Serbs lifted a blockade on fuel supplies.

Spokesman Jan-Dirk Merveldt told reporters: "Nothing short of a total freedom of movement for UNPROFOR will be acceptable... The quicker we can get aid to those in desperate trouble, the better for the whole community."



Serb soldiers check boxes with humanitarian aid opened by a French U.N. soldier at a check point in the Serb-controlled Croatian region of Krajina. The nine-tonne UNHCR convoy carrying some 90 tonnes of desperately needed food supplies later was allowed to pass and reached its destination, the Muslim enclave of Bihać (AFP photo)

European Union governments, having rejected calls for a U.N. withdrawal from Bosnia, ended a summit in Germany by voicing strong support for the U.N. aid programme which the Serbs have obstructed systematically for months.

In a communique condemning the Serb onslaught on Bihać which provoked the present crisis, the EU said UNPROFOR "should continue its crucial mission of providing humanitarian assistance and saving human life."

Diplomatic and military tensions were eased by signals from the Bosnian Serbs that they are ready to talk again about a peace plan drawn up by the major powers, which they rejected in August.

The plan would divide Bosnia roughly in two between the Serbs and a confederation of Muslims and Croats.

No date was set for talks but the Serbs asked for early consultations with U.S. envoy Charles Redman, who will have to secure the agreement of the Muslim-led Bosnian government to any change in the plan, which it has already accepted.

There was indirect evidence of the Bosnian Serbs' apparent willingness to negotiate when rump Yugoslavia restored their telephone communications Friday.

These were cut in August when Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic imposed a military and economic blockade on them as punishment for turning down the peace plan.

Envoys of the five-nation "contact group" have shuttled between the warring sides to promote renewed talks since the Bihać fighting brought Serb-U.N. relations to their lowest ebb of the 32-month war.

The Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) seized about 500 U.N. peacekeepers as hostages against NATO air strikes, activated missile bases which threatened NATO warplanes and tightened the noose on aid deliveries.

Mr. Merveldt said the last 187 hostages were released Saturday but other U.N. sources said four were still detained in Banja Luka in northern Bosnia.

The food convoy to Sarajevo brought 180 tonnes of grain which assured immediate bread supplies but the real test of Serb good intentions lay in the lifting of the fuel blockade, described by Mr. Merveldt as "particularly worrisome."

Ukrainian U.N. peacekeepers in Sarajevo had no petrol for their armoured vehicles and French troops were unable to carry out anti-sniper patrols.

Peacekeepers in the eastern Muslim enclaves of Gorazde and Srebrenica could not use their vehicles and patrolled on foot despite the constant threat from marksman.

U.N. spokeswoman Miriam Suchaki said UNPROFOR would stop escorting aid convoys Monday and be unable to send repair crews to Sarajevo utilities without new supplies of fuel.

UNPROFOR commander, General Sir Michael Rose, set out to try to reach the Bihać enclave and waited for Serb permission to enter it as fighting continued between Muslims and Serbs.

The U.N. blamed Serbs for mortar attacks which killed a woman and wounded seven other people Friday in Bihać town, a U.N. protected "safe area."

"We view this attack as a clear intimidation aimed at the civilian population,"

spokesman Matthew Risley said.

Until it receded Friday, the prospect of an UNPROFOR withdrawal threatened to draw NATO and U.S. forces into the conflict to protect the lightly-armed U.N. troops from attack while they pulled out.

A Western diplomat in Sarajevo said that although the Serbs brought about the confrontation by their harassment of the U.N., it was in their interests that the peacekeepers remain as insurance against NATO air attacks.

"The Serbs should be on their knees with flowers begging the U.N. to stay," he added.

Meanwhile one of President Bill Clinton's harshest critics Friday gave the U.S. leader strong support for his offer to send troops to cover any U.N. withdrawal from Bosnia.

"I am very supportive of that," said Republican House

Rebels accuse Angola of violating ceasefire

SAO TOME (R) — The Angolan rebel movement UNITA said Saturday government forces had attacked its positions near the northern town of Malange, breaking an already shaky ceasefire agreement.

UNITA Radio, monitored in the island state of Sao Tome and Principe, said government troops had since Wednesday attacked the villages of Conda and Longa, some 15 kilometres east of Malange. It gave no details of casualties.

A UNITA statement released in Lisbon late Friday said government forces had captured the town of Lombe, 20 kilometres west of Malange, on Dec. 3 and were patrolling north and south of Lombe.

A U.N. World Food Programme plane was hit by gunfire as it prepared to land with food supplies for Malange Wednesday.

An aid source said Thursday the aircraft was hit by "a significant number of bullets" as it came in to land at Malange. The plane touched down safely at the town and no one was hurt.

Relief flights to the town have been suspended until guarantees had been received for the safety of aircraft.

Despite the Nov. 22 ceasefire in the 19-year civil war, road access to Malange is still difficult because of minefields, the rainy season and the threat of attack.

The UNITA statement said government forces were preparing to advance on Negage, which has an airfield, near the northern town of Uige.

"These ceasefire violations have increased and led to constant provocations of our forces by MPLA troops, with the clear intention of advancing on Negage at any moment," it said.

No independent confirmation of UNITA's accusations was available.

Clinton attacks Republican welfare plan

MIAMI (R) — President Bill Clinton Saturday called for welfare reform next year, but said a Republican plan suggesting that the children of some recipients might be put in orphanages was "dead wrong."

Mr. Clinton, in Miami for the Summit of the Americas meeting of 34 hemisphere leaders, used his weekly radio address to the nation to focus on the need for welfare reform — a principle endorsed by both Democrats and Republicans.

"We have to change welfare so that it drives people toward the freedom of work, not the confines of dependence," Mr. Clinton said. "Work is still the best social programme ever invented."

He said that "we won't have ended welfare as we know it until its central focus is to move people off welfare and into a job so that they can support themselves and their families."

Mr. Clinton condemned a Republican proposal, contained in the "contract with America" offered by Newt Gingrich, the next speaker of the House of Representatives, the leader of the majority party in the 435-member body.

The plan would ban states from paying welfare benefits to children whose paternity is not established and to those born out of wedlock to women under 18.

One possible use of the money saved would be for states to establish orphanages, according to the Republican plan.

"There's some people out there who argue that we should let some sort of big, new institution take parents' place, that we should even take children away from parents, and put the children in orphanages," Mr. Clinton said.

"Well those people are dead wrong," he said. "We need less governmental interference in family life, not more."

Mr. Clinton called Thursday for a national conference on welfare reform in January with the goal of getting a bipartisan proposal before Congress early next year.

"There are a lot of ideas out there for reforming welfare — some are really good, and some are just political attention getters," Mr. Clinton said, adding that "everybody agrees that the system is badly broken and needs to be fixed."

Mr. Clinton, who had campaigned for president vowing to "change welfare as we know it," earlier this year presented Congress with a proposal that would cost some \$9 billion over five years. It never reached either chamber of Congress for a vote.

His proposal would have moved about 500,000 people off welfare rolls and into jobs by the year 2004 — but that's a small part of the 4.5 million Americans on welfare.

"There's no greater gap between mainstream American values and modern government than we find in the welfare system," Mr. Clinton said.

While saying the system was created "for all the right reasons," Mr. Clinton said it "undermines the very values — work, family and responsibility — that people need to put themselves back on track."

He noted that one of the purposes of the summit was to encourage and develop trade within the hemisphere "so that we can create high-wage jobs and new opportunities for our people here at home."

Pentagon buys V-22; cancels Stealth missile

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The Pentagon said Friday it will go ahead with the revolutionary \$30 billion V-22 helicopter programme, but will cancel a \$13 billion "Stealth" missile plan in post-cold war juggling of U.S. weapons.

The V-22 announcement by Defence Secretary William Perry was a major boon to Boeing Co. and Textron Inc. They are developing the off-delayed tilt-rotor helicopter, which takes off vertically but flies like a regular aircraft.

The military is now expected to buy over 500 of the troop-carrying, turbo-prop V-22s in the coming years for the Marine Corps and special operations forces, which use older-style helicopters dating back to the Vietnam War.

At a news conference, Mr. Perry announced a number of arms decisions including a major delay in the army's planned "comanche" helicopter as well as cancellation of a \$13 billion tri-service standoff attack missile programme being developed by Northrop-Grumman Corp.

The plan to build 1,200 radar-evading "Stealth" cruise missiles for the armed forces has been battered by technical and cost problems.

"That made it a very logical candidate for cancellation, and we are doing that," Mr. Perry said.

Mr. Perry and Deputy Defence Secretary John Deutch told reporters they had decided on a number of weapons delays to save \$7.5 billion in development costs over six years including:

— Indefinite postponement of the army's Comanche attack helicopter, a \$40 billion programme under development by Boeing and United Technologies Corp. Instead, the Pentagon will buy only two flyable prototypes in the foreseeable future in a cut that will cost the firms \$2.1 billion through 2001.

— Cutting fiscal 1996 research and development funds for the air force's F-22 "Stealth" fighter by \$200 million. But that is not expected to cause major delay in the air force plan to buy about 400 of the jets for \$75 billion in the next century.

— Reducing construction of Arleigh Burke class destroyers from 18 to 16 over the next six years to save \$1.5 billion.

— Delaying construction of a new class of U.S. attack submarine by one year to 2001 to save \$1.5 billion.

— Delaying development of the Marine Corps' advanced amphibious assault vehicle for two years, pushing replacement of current landing craft beyond the turn of the century.

Mr. Perry stressed that the cuts were much smaller than those he had anticipated before President Bill Clinton announced last week that he would seek an additional \$25 billion in defence spending from Congress for the next six years.

"These cuts, we believe, are prudent, and they will not interfere with our efforts to develop the new wave of weaponry needed for the 21st century," the secretary told reporters.

"We believe that these adjustments are acceptable. They protect our technology base, and they allow important force modernisation programmes to continue at a rate that we can afford and they do provide the necessary savings which help us increase funding for readiness."

Meanwhile, former CIA Director William Colby said Friday the end of the cold war has brought the chance for large cuts in the agency, especially in its budget.

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) budget, officially secret, is known to be about \$3 billion a year.

"The Soviet forces were at the Fulda Gap, ready to attack at four o'clock next morning," he said. "They could have been at the English Channel in two weeks."

We had to be able to give any indication we could if they seemed about to do that."

The Fulda Gap is the area in central Germany where it was thought Soviet forces could most easily penetrate to the West.

Now the extremely expensive array of technology used to spot the preliminaries to an invasion is no longer needed, Mr. Colby said. He estimated that it would take five years to rebuild Russian forces to the level of a renewed menace.

Mr. Colby, 74, is now a Washington lawyer and director of an investment project called the Vietnam Frontier Fund. He was CIA chief in Saigon during the Vietnam War. Earlier this month, the Vietnamese government — successor of the

Mafia hearing for 'Mr Italy' postponed

ROME (R) — A court hearing to decide whether Italy's former Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti should be tried on mafia charges was put off again Saturday to give defence lawyers more time to read through a mountain of documents.

Agostino Gristina, the judge who will hear a case that could lead to the most sensational trial in post-war Italy, said the preliminary hearing, which had been scheduled to begin on Dec. 14, had been postponed until January 27.

He confirmed the six-week delay as Mr. Andreotti, known as "Mr Italy" for his seven terms as premier, came face to face with mafia boss Salvatore "Totò" Riina in a southern courtroom.

"The hearing has been put back at the request of lawyers for the defence," Judge Gristina said by telephone from the Sicilian capital Palermo.

It was the second time that Mr. Andreotti's lawyers had won a delay. The hearing originally was to have opened on Oct. 19.

Prosecuting magistrates have based their case against the former Christian Democrat on testimony from mob turncoats.

They alleged that the master political wheeler-dealer protected organised crime in the corridors of power as a full-fledged member of the mafia.

Mr. Andreotti, a devout Roman Catholic, has called the allegations blasphemy, arguing that he is the victim of a mafia plot to punish him for crackdowns by governments he led.

His lawyers say they are still digesting 56,000 pages of prosecution evidence and a further 6,000 pages of transcripts submitted by magistrates last month.

"Having to read through 60,000 pages is terrifying," said Odoardo Ascarelli, one of the two defence lawyers. "I'm reading day and night," he told Reuters.

Mr. Andreotti, a life senator, was summoned Saturday to testify at the trial in Reggio Calabria, on the toe of Italy, of Mr. Riina and 13 other alleged mafiosi over the murder in 1991 of a local magistrate.

He exercised a right to remain silent pending clarification of his own position at next month's Palermo hearing.

The only news in this visit of mine is that I was able to see Riina for the first time, even if from a distance. I've only seen him on television before," Mr. Andreotti told reporters.

Prosecutors in the Palermo case alleged Mr. Andreotti had close ties to Mr. Riina, who has been held in virtual isolation following his arrest in 1993 after 23 years at large.

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Jordan Times advertising department.

Deeds speak louder

THE BOSNIAN conflict is poised to occupy centre stage when the summit of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) convenes in Casablanca next week. The bankruptcy of the United Nations' policy in dealing with the three-year-old armed conflict has become clearer by the day. There appears to be no prospect whatsoever for diplomacy to succeed in the face of the Serb determination to redraw the map of Bosnia by force. Even NATO appears to be ready to relinquish its role there after Moscow succeeded to checkmate its long-standing efforts to defuse the situation militarily. Against this backdrop, the Islamic states seem ready now to exercise a more effective role in the conflict. Of course it remains unclear what the OIC plans to do to redeem its past stance which was characterised by inaction and rhetorical posture. Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic may have set the tone for the forthcoming OIC summit by demanding a more determined effort by the Muslim states to come to the rescue of his country and people. The question is what would the Islamic countries do more in the future than what they have already done, except having more of them willing to contribute troops to the U.N. Protection Forces (UNPROFOR). Now that several Western countries made known their decision to withdraw their troops from the international service with UNPROFOR, this peacekeeping avenue is of course available to the OIC countries, but it is doubtful that it can change much of the military situation in the conflict-stricken country. It is also doubtful that the fighting Serbs would welcome more troops from the Islamic countries, even under the pretext of peace-keeping missions. Even financial contributions from the OIC member states would not be able to offer the Bosnian Muslims effective relief in the face of the arms embargo still being enforced on all the countries of former Yugoslavia.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Sardar Asef Ahmad Ali has hinted recently that the OIC has a plan to assist the Bosnians in their ordeal. Although Mr. Ali described this plan as an action plan, in reality it turned out to be nothing more than a planned meeting between the OIC contact group and an international contact group comprising the U.S., Russia, France, Britain and Germany. If this is the sort of action plan that the OIC has in mind, then we are afraid we are back to where we have started three years ago.

It is better to be candid with the Bosnians than to keep on making them believe that real help is on its way. Then the Bosnians would have to make their own calculations and draw the necessary conclusions instead of waiting for effective assistance that remains elusive.

The OIC is therefore invited to offer the Bosnians a more coherent policy that they can understand and cope with. By pretending that the Islamic states agonise over the fate of the Bosnian Muslims and offering nothing more than words, they would be in effect not only deceiving the Bosnians but undermining the OIC's credibility.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

LEY EXPRESSING his surprise that the Arab inhabitants of Palestinian land exceed the two million mark, the Israeli governor, Yitzhak Rabin, is paving the way for his government to announce that it would not tolerate the repatriation of the displaced Palestinians, said Mahmoud Rimawi, writer in Al Ra'i daily Saturday. It is rather strange to hear the premier make such a statement at a time when his foreign minister and President Arafat were having discussions over calling for a meeting involving the Israelis, the Palestinians, the Jordanians and the Egyptians to determine the future of the refugees and the displaced because of Israel's occupation of their own homeland, said the writer. The least that can be said about Mr. Rabin's statement is that it runs contrary to the spirit of peace and reflects the racist nature of Zionism, added the writer. The writer said that the Palestinian land is now inhabited by more than five million Jews brought in from other countries to help Israel perpetuate its occupation of Arab lands and that one quarter of a million Jews live in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. By hinting that Israel can accept no repatriation of Arabs to their lawful territories, said the writer, Mr. Rabin is putting one more obstacle in the path of establishing a durable peace in the region.

MOHAMMAD KAWASH, a writer in Al Dastour bitterly criticised the Islamist extremist groups who have been killing writers and journalists in Algeria and who have recently slaughtered innocent school-girls as barbaric and amassing the image of Islam. What is happening in Algeria is a major distortion of Islam through continued acts of violence and repeated attacks on the lives of innocent people, said the writer. While the Islamists in the east conduct their opposition to existing regimes and governments through dialogue and positive and constructive criticism, those in Algeria have been resorting to violence and bloodshed to achieve their goals, added the writer. He alleged the Islamists' actions are not only cause of disgust and horror, they actually help strengthen those elements opposed to Islam and those who are instigating the world against the Muslim nations, concluded the writer.

SUNDAY'S ECONOMIC PULSE

North, south Mediterranean partnership gains momentum

IN THEIR session in Lisbon, held in June 1992, the European Union showed a keen interest in the areas beyond their immediate region, especially their southern and eastern flanks, in Maghreb and Mashrek. It seems, they had realised that their own security and stability would not be assured as long as these neighbouring areas remained poor, divided and backward, and consequently a source of trouble.

Although economic considerations are and were always of utmost importance to the European Union, the Europeans found strong interests in the south and east Mediterranean regions in terms of security and social stability. After all, this area is a source of legal and illegal migration, as millions of North Africans and Turks live permanently in France and Germany respectively. The area is also perceived as home for fundamentalism, fanaticism and terrorism, all of which are the natural results of poverty and despair.

In the European Union recent meeting in Corfu, in June 1994, the concept of partnership started to gather momentum. The commission was asked to formulate guidelines for a new union's Mediterranean policy for peace, stability, security and the socio-economic development of the region. A Euro-Mediterranean conference in 1995 is now

under consideration. The purpose is to establish a partnership between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, along with specific programmes and budgets, taking into account the interdependence between Europe and the Mediterranean area in environment, energy, migration, trade and investment.

The Europeans give priority to Morocco, Tunis and Malta in the Maghreb area and Turkey, Israel and Cyprus in the Mashrek. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan's initiative succeeded in making the European Union expand the partnership project to cover the remaining countries in North Africa and Arab Mashrek, including Jordan.

The partnership under consideration does not mean joining the European Union. There shall remain two distinct groups. The Europeans may deal with each country separately, but in accordance with a uniform agreement. The major step is to have a free trade area with full exemption of custom tax and other restrictions. The European Union will provide grants and other forms of aid to the tune of European Currency Units (ECUs) 5.5 billion over five years. It will conduct dialogues over political issues, policies, democracy, good governance and human rights.

In order for us to enter into a free trade arrangement with Europe, a lot of adjustment, modernisation, efficiency and competitiveness are needed. Mashrek and Maghreb countries will be given an interim period to adjust and reduce customs protection progressively, over 10 to 15 years. Besides, there will be cash, injected as compensation, which will go to governments and not to the casualities and victims among weak industries. Dialogue is a polite expression for teaching us to apply democracy, respect human rights, put an end to corruption and mismanagement of resources and pushing governments in this direction.

The north and south Mediterranean partnership could be a more viable alternative to the so-called Middle East market, which is believed to be an American idea, but with no one formally calling for its implementation or providing a meaningful guidance or mechanism to go about and underwrite the inevitable costs of adjustment involved.

The Europeans, our colonists in the first half of this century, are able to change their image in the eyes of the Arabs, contrary to the Americans who failed to project themselves as acceptable partners or friends of the Arabs. America behaves like a country whose sole supremacy is a gift it does not know what to make out of.

By Shlomo Ben-Ami

AS WITH most peace accords in modern times, the debate over the Oslo agreement between Israel and the Palestinians tends to oscillate between idealism and realism, righteousness and political naïveté. "Oslo," which is being discussed by the Israeli cabinet this week, was never intended to be a peace treaty; it offered only an agreed framework for a solution of a century-old, intricate conflict. It is from this perspective that its record so far should be assessed.

I have always believed that the legitimate national rights of the Palestinians called for a permanent solution, instead of the complex chain of interdependent interim stages agreed upon in Oslo. And anyway, the difficult structure of the Oslo accords creates too many uncertainties; clearly, the complexity is being conceived by the enemies of the agreement — Hamas, Islamic Jihad and others — as a standing invitation for its destruction.

But the Palestinians do not hold the monopoly on frustration. The logic and consequences of the Oslo framework are being challenged by many Israelis, who feel deceived by the failure of the agreement to provide them with greater personal security (the number of victims of Palestinian terrorism since Oslo has now reached 100). Some would conclude from this state of affairs that salvation lies in speeding up the negotiations and proceeding to a permanent settlement without delay.

But others are existentially worried by still unanswered questions: is the suicidal brand of terrorism of the extremist Palestinian organisations just their way of promoting the cause of an independent state in Gaza and the West Bank? Or does it represent a more fundamental, and indeed fundamentalist, rejection of any peaceful deal with Israel? Is Yasser Arafat's reluctance to confront his opponents a tactical move or an indication that he does not disavow their strategic objectives; indeed, perhaps even shares them?

For decades, the international community and most Palestinian organisations have been exerting pressure on Israel to reach a deal with Mr. Arafat's PLO. Now that such a deal, imperfect as it may be, has been reached, its viability is being challenged by those who refuse to abandon guns and dynamite; and its legitimacy is being questioned by some champions of the Palestinian cause in the West. This cannot serve as a stimulus to Israel's politically divided society to support

M. KAHIL



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further agreements with the Palestinians.

Faced with destitution and hopelessness in Gaza, and a Palestinian outcry for rapid political and economic improvement, it is hard to disagree with the case for an immediate move to a permanent solution, to help us overcome the impasse of desperation and terrorism. The concept of interim agreements has run its course; it must be superseded.

But political realities may not allow this. Is the Rabin government, a desperately narrow coalition constantly losing popular support to the intransigent right, in a position at present to tackle such highly divisive issues as Jerusalem, the future of the settlements, the final borders, the 1948 refugees and the

permanent political status of the Palestinian lands? To address these issues now may be a recipe for bringing down the Rabin government, precipitating the coming to power of the right and possibly stopping dead the entire peace process. And that might be precisely the strategy of the rejectionist Palestinian front.

Throughout history, national movements have had to sacrifice unity, even at the price of civil strife, in order to reach the objective of independence and statehood. Zionism was no exception, and Mr. Arafat may have to face the same tragic dilemma sooner or later — if only to stave off a challenge to his own rule.

Israel, too, will have to abandon the fallacy that

peace can be achieved through a wide national consensus. In this country, only wars, with the notable exception of the 1982 Lebanese adventure, unite, peace, paradoxically, is a divisive endeavour, for it requires so many painful compromises that consensus is simply unattainable. The test of leadership, then, is its capacity to opt for the daring decision, even at the price of political perdition.

Another fallacy is the neo-colonialist approach that seeks salvation for the Palestinians only through economic development and foreign investments. Important as they are, these can never be a substitute for political rights and national dreams. It is now fair to say that economic cooperation

with the Palestinians is accepted as the way to cement the peace process. Those among us who advocate a political separation between Israel and the Palestinians should support a policy of wise investments in the territories as the best way to free the Palestinians of their economic dependency on Israel, and to disentangle them from what is now a truly colonial situation: their absorption as unequal partners in the socio-economic tissue of Israeli life.

Neither Palestinians nor Israelis can expect a peace without pain. We can, however, do more to help make this process more viable. To begin with, we should all abide by our commitments. These impose on Mr. Arafat the obligation, so far unfulfilled, to abrogate the clauses in the Palestinian national covenant that call for Israel's destruction, and "to discipline" terrorists from within his ranks. Confidence-building cannot be unilateral. If Israelis are to be convinced of their enemy's just demands, they must be assured that their own are not being ignored.

In Oslo, for the first time in the history of their cruel conflict, Israelis and Palestinians started to share a common ethos of peace. Mr. Arafat, the embodiment of our past nightmares, the principal object of our abhorrence throughout the years, walks in our midst, and the earth does not shake. Not only are we tired of the bloody conflict, but also of the war of images that accompanied and fuelled it. As for the Palestinians, Mr. Rabin, the quintessential representative of Israel's military establishment, is now their most reliable partner for peace.

The writer is head of the Morris E. Curiel Centre for International Studies at Tel Aviv University. This article is reprinted from The Independent.

Islam — the 'new enemy'

By Haim Baram

The Oslo agreement has failed to bring the peoples of the Middle East any closer, despite the pompous ceremonies and drastically premature allocation of Nobel Peace Prizes to the manifestly undeserving protagonists, Messrs. Rabin, Peres, and Arafat. The old hatred has not subsided, but Mr. Arafat and his friends have become a tolerated necessity in Israel. Israeli leaders and journalists pour a tremendous amount of scorn on Mr. Arafat, and at best grant him the reputation of a survivor, but even this dubious compliment is uttered reluctantly.

The feared and respected enemy now is Islam; the demonisation of Muslims is part of the same propagandist strategy reserved until recently for Palestinian nationalism. The Likud leader, Bibi Netanyahu, is currently touring the globe and spreading the new gospel. According to Mr. Netanyahu, Mr. Arafat has become completely unimportant, since he cannot possibly stem the tide of Islamic radicalism generated by Iran. It is an almost risible tactic, since the Likud leader himself described Mr. Arafat, until recently, as the principal threat not only to Israel, but also to the entire Western world.

Mr. Netanyahu has found a new line of reasoning for his ancient rejectionist stance. Mr. Arafat does not matter, the Islamists are going to take over from him and rule the Palestinian people, and therefore any territorial concessions are absolutely pointless. Iran, ironically, is portrayed as the great Satan, capable of threatening the West with nuclear bombs. Lebanon and even Syria will undergo an Islamic revolution pretty soon, their uneasy flirtation with the Americans will end and Israel will regain its status as a main strategic asset of the West. Therefore the pressure on Israel

to make territorial concessions will also cease. The number of Israelis who are ready to inhale this nonsense is unbelievable.

A U.S. TV film depicting the "Islamic threat" inside the U.S. was screened in Israel Nov. 22, provoking tremendous public outcry and even pseudo-intellectual debate. The ground is ready and fertile, the anti-peace demonstrations in Gaza leave their mark, the terrorists are feared and hated. And all of them are now from the Islamist groups.

Will Mr. Netanyahu succeed in turning his dubious play into a potent weapon in the 1996 general elections? This is indeed a possibility. The old game of scare-mongering is returning to the Israeli political arena; only the enemy has put on a new attire. The Hamas fighters are motivated by Iran, Israeli "concessions" lead nowhere, and the best policy is to cling to "Eretz Yisrael". This is new politics geared to the same old goals, and the omens are bad.

If this policy of scare-mongering was confined only to Likud circles, it could be dismissed as an act of premature electioneering by Netanyahu. Unfortunately, Mr. Rabin himself has adopted a similar line of reasoning, especially in his frequent visits to Washington. The "Islamic peril" is one of Mr. Rabin's most tiresome themes, and the aim of his campaign is obvious. An ardent cold war anti-communist all his adult life, he hopes to convince the Americans that Iran is posing the same threat as Moscow in the good old days.

Even Professor Avishai Margalit, a prominent supporter of the government, accused Mr. Rabin in Maariv on Nov. 28 of playing with fire. Mr. Rabin and Mr. Netanyahu were a "pair of pyromaniacs," he said.

Middle East International.

LETTERS

Hope for life

To the Editor:

"What do you have to do with it?" asked the consul's assistant, confused.

"I work for Al-Amal Cancer Centre," I said, "and we've adopted Tahani's case. We are the ones who found her a hospital to give her the bone marrow transplant."

"Yes, but what are you getting out of it?" he asked, still not sure why I was there pleading on behalf of a 10-year-old girl for a visa to the United States, so she could go get a bone marrow transplant.

"Nothing, we're not in this for anything, except helping this cancer patient find a hospital that will do the operation for her, at their own expense," I explained.

He finally began to get the picture. Like many people in Jordan, this man had no concept of the various roles Al Amal Cancer Centre is being built to take on. He had no notion that even though the centre itself is not yet operational, its work has already begun and its fight against cancer commenced.

When Tahani Huniti and her father came to Al Amal Cancer Centre about three months ago, and Dr. Abdullah Al Khatib asked me to start writing to cancer centres and oncology specialists we had contacts with to try and find her a sponsor. I must confess I was a little sceptical of ever finding a centre that would be willing to receive a foreign patient with acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL) and perform a \$100,000 operation for her, for free!

It was a pity, I thought to myself, especially since she already had a perfectly matching donor, her mother. If Al Amal Cancer Centre had been finished, Tahani could have had the operation here, and it would have been funded by the centre's poor patient fund.

Sweden, in Saudi Arabia, not to mention the letters we distributed to the 300 doctors who attended the 8th Jordanian Medical Conference held in Amman this past October. The more time passed, the more apologies we received, the more Tahani's morale dropped, and the more determined we became.

Whenever Tahani was in too much pain from her medication, she would beg her father to take her to see Dr. Khatib, who represented her only chance. It used to put a lump in my throat to see this man, who knew fully well the anguish of losing a daughter to leukemia, crush the pain he felt every time he saw Tahani — because she reminded him so much of the 10-year-old daughter he once had — and do his best to raise her spirits and give her hope and renew her faith.

I had never received a call from the office asking for me at home before. That's why on Nov. 22, at 7:30 in the evening, I was startled when I heard Abu Jamal (Dr. Khatib) screaming: "They've accepted her!" (Every one at the office knew about Tahani, and was anxious for her, even the night guard). I ran to the office and found Dr. Khatib, sitting at my desk, with an uncharacteristic smile on his face.

"Dr. Razzouk from St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis just called," he told me. "He will send you a fax tomorrow confirming their willingness to handle Tahani's operation and its medical cost. See what you can do about getting them a visa as soon as possible."

Only God the Almighty can give life, but in every and any way it can Al Amal Cancer Centre will always do its best to give those who need it the hope... in more ways than one.



Dina Anton Ra'ad,
Al Amal Cancer Centre,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

No economic role for Israel, Syrian oil minister says

AIRO (R) — Syria said Saturday it was premature to talk of economic relations with a predatory Israel as long as the Jewish state continued to occupy Arab territory.

Syrian Oil and Mineral Resources Minister Nadir Nabulsi told reporters after a meeting of Arab oil ministers in Cairo that the Arab states would first integrate with each other before they started talking about a Middle East market.

"We think that the term Middle East market is against the Arab countries. It is domination of Israel over Arab resources, especially in the oil sector," he said.

"Talking about peace at the present time, when our territory is still occupied, is premature," he added.

His remarks echoed his speech in the brief open part of the meeting, where he also repeated Syria's position that it wanted a just, comprehensive and permanent peace including full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights and other areas.

In his speech he said the Middle East market idea, much vaunted by the United States and other Western states, was a cover to tighten Israeli control over Arab wealth and to deprive the Arabs of their resources.

"We are working on a single Arab stand against what we now see in reality," he added later, referring to the economic fragmentation of the Arab World.

Mr. Nabulsi did not specify any projects he considered harmful to Arab interests, but OPEC members Egypt and Qatar are both studying the possibility of exporting natural gas to Israel.

Egypt says it will sell its gas to the Jewish state as long as such a project is economically viable. It is also studying projects for exports to the Palestinian territories and Jordan.

Qatar has ambitious plans to export gas from one of the biggest gas fields in the world.

Qatari Oil Minister Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Attiyah told reporters after the meeting that it did not take political considerations into account in its economic planning.

"We are obviously a gas producing country and we're interested in developing gas and in diversifying markets. We have concentrated on the South East Asian market. As for other markets, they obviously have to be economic and give economic advantages," he said.

"Economic projects are not treated from a political standpoint," he added.

The Qatari News Agency quoted Mr. Attiyah as saying in an interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation Friday that he supported Iraq's return to the oil market.

But, asked to confirm this shortly before the meeting opened, Mr. Attiyah said: "Did I say that?... no, someone was asking and this has become a very classical

answer that OPEC has decided, when Iraq comes to the market, to have an extraordinary meeting to discuss the situation."

All but one oil minister from OPEC members Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Bahrain, Libya, Iraq, Algeria, Egypt, Syria were present at the meeting. Libyan Minister Abdullah Al Badri pulled out at the last minute.

Iraqi Oil Minister Safa Hadi Jawad Al Habubi, whose country is still barred from exporting oil, said before the meeting he was sure United Nations trade sanctions would be relaxed next year to allow Iraqi oil exports back onto the market.

The ministers approved an OPEC budget of 1.361 million Kuwaiti dinars (\$4.54 million) for 1995, discussed joint projects, affiliated companies and institutions and agreed to extend for two years support for the Baghdad-based Arab Petroleum Training Institute.

Trade envoys fail to choose new WTO chief

GENEVA (R) — Major trading powers failed Friday to agree on who will be the first head of the new World Trade Organisation (WTO), despite high-level political contacts over the past few days, trade officials said.

But they pledged to try to reach a consensus so as to announce a choice among the three regional candidates by year-end.

Italy's former Trade Minister Renato Ruggiero — backed by the European Union (EU) — still leads the pack, ahead of former Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari and South Korea's Trade Minister Kim Chul-su, according to unofficial scorecards.

Washington and Latin American countries strongly support Mr. Salinas, while Asian countries have lined up behind Mr. Kim in the race for the high-profile post available from Jan. 1.

Andras Szepesi, the Hungarian trade ambassador who is conducting behind-the-scenes consultations to choose the new WTO chief, told senior envoys certain progress had been made.

"But at the moment there is not yet a basis for a credible consensus around a successful candidate," he told top delegates.

Mr. Szepesi was speaking to an informal, private session held on the fringes of the two-day annual meeting of the 124 member states of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

Trade envoys agreed Thursday that the WTO would be launched on Jan. 1, although the GATT will continue to coexist for a one-year transition period.

Peter Sutherland, director-general of the GATT whose contract runs to June 30, has refused to say whether he would stay on as caretaker WTO chief pending a final choice.

Jean-Pierre Leng, EU trade ambassador to the GATT, told reporters after Friday's session: "We continue to believe there will be a consensus by year-end."

He said it was regrettable that no consensus had emerged, adding: "We think it would be a bad signal not to have a director-general when the new WTO starts up in January."

Mr. Ruggiero commands a very large majority, according to the EU trade ambassador, who declined to give figures.

"A very large majority does not mean a consensus yet, but it could permit building a consensus around him," Mr. Leng added.

Clinton urges hemispheric 'partnership for prosperity'

MIAMI (R) — President Clinton launched a pan-American trade summit Friday by calling for a new "partnership for prosperity" in the western hemisphere involving the free flow of goods from Alaska to Argentina.

In a speech to Florida political and civic leaders and others who helped organize the summit, Mr. Clinton said expanded trade was the key to freedom and economic opportunity for all the peoples of the Americas.

But he drew his loudest applause and only standing ovation when he referred to Cuba, the only nation in the hemisphere with a non-democratically elected leader — Fidel Castro — and the only U.S. neighbour not represented in Miami.

"We support the Cuban people's desire for peaceful democratic change. And we hope by the next time we have one of these summits... a democratic Cuba will take its place at the table of nations," Mr. Clinton said.

The U.S.-sponsored summit of 34 North and South American nations is the first gathering of its kind since 1967, when then-president Lyndon Johnson met other hemisphere leaders in Punta del Este, Uruguay.

Mr. Clinton proposed it as part of an administration effort to change the focus of U.S. foreign policy from the security-first stress of the cold war era to a new emphasis on economic growth resulting from trade and investment.

It is intended to build on the success of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which has led to vastly increased commerce between the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Taking a veiled jibe at independent political leader Ross Perot, an outspoken opponent who claimed NAFTA would lead to a mass exodus of U.S. jobs, Mr. Clinton said "there has been no giant sucking sound, except for American goods going across the border."

"History has given the peoples of the Americas a dazzling opportunity to build a community of nations committed to the values of liberty and the promise of prosperity," he said. "Now, over the next three days, the 34 democratically-elected leaders of our hemisphere will gather to begin to seize this opportunity."

Mr. Clinton said he and the other leaders would talk about how to lower trade barriers, strengthen democratic institutions and improve the quality of life throughout the hemisphere.

U.S. officials said the meeting was expected to produce agreement in principle to create a free trade zone throughout the hemisphere by the end of the next decade.

It was also expected to bring agreement to cooperate in fighting corruption, terrorism and narcotics trafficking, they said.

"If we're successful," Mr. Clinton said, "the summit will lead to more jobs, opportunity and prosperity for our children and the generations to come."

"We will have launched a new partnership for prosperity," he said.

U.S. sales to other countries in the hemisphere, including Latin America, Canada and the Caribbean

nations, totalled about \$160 billion in 1993, 38 per cent of all U.S. sales abroad.

Administration officials say U.S. exports to Latin America alone accounted for 1.3 million jobs last year, and produced a trade surplus of more than \$4 billion.

Mr. Clinton's effort to eliminate all trade barriers from the Arctic to the southern tip of South America is not universally popular within his Democratic Party.

In a nine-page letter to the president this week, the Democratic leader of the House of Representatives, Richard Gephardt, called on him to keep environmental, labour and other issues at the forefront when negotiating with his Latin American counterparts.

Mr. Gephardt, calling the November elections that turned control of the House and Senate over to the Republicans "a wake-up call," said voters "told us that we had strayed from recognizing what our priority must be: improving the economic lives of working people."

"We must do all we can to ensure that we do not have another NAFTA-like debate that divides the Democratic Party," he said.

Mr. Clinton was expected to face criticism from some Latin leaders for the rising anti-immigrant tide in the United States as symbolised by the success of proposition 187 in California.

That measure, which would deny educational and medical benefits to illegal immigrants, was overwhelmingly approved in last month's mid-term election despite Mr. Clinton's staunch opposition.

Japan combats strong yen in push for 2.5% growth next year — OECD

PARIS (AFP) — Japan, a country in profound change, struggling hard against the strength of the yen to emerge from recession with growth of 2.5 per cent next year, an OECD report has showed.

The government must keep ahead quickly with deregulation in the interests of Japanese consumers as well as of domestic and foreign producers, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) said.

"This was 'essential' and might require a 'different' approach based on creation of a 'powerful independent organisation', as suggested by the so-called Hirawa report, to keep pressure on ministries, the OECD suggested.

"But big packages to stimulate the economy had caused substantial deterioration of government finances."

The central and local government deficits had risen by 10 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1993, and expected to rise by 16 per cent in 1994 to 17.5 per cent of GDP.

The restructuring of companies and rise of the yen had prolonged the recession — and in 1993 "the growth of exports fell significantly" and Japanese firms "continued to lose international competitiveness."

Japanese exporters had reduced export prices by eight per cent to absorb two thirds of the rise of the yen, so the share of Japanese exports in world trade in current prices had continued to increase and import penetration fell to less than it had been at the peak in 1990.

Hence the current account surplus in yen fell only slightly last year and the trade surplus in dollars rose.

But in the first half of 1994 "the volume of goods imports rose rapidly, ensuring a marked increase in the openness of the Japanese markets."

The trade surplus, which had risen to \$131.4 billion in 1993 from \$117.6 billion in 1992, would fall slightly to \$128.8 billion this year and again to \$120.1 billion next year.

Inflation would fall to 0.6 per cent this year and then to 0.4 per cent next year from 1.0 per cent in 1993 and 1.6 per cent in 1992.

But the rate of unemployment

ment, which had been 2.2 per cent in 1992, would rise to 2.5 per cent in 1993, 2.9 in 1994 and 3.0 per cent in 1995.

After two years of recession, the economy had shown signs of bottoming out in the first half of this year and appeared to have begun a "gradual recovery", but a rise of the yen might "force companies to restructure their balance sheets further."

The recovery would probably not take Japan to the high growth rates of the last decade, but one way of achieving "significant gains in living standards" would be to reform further the law and tax system.

"Prices remained 'exceptionally high' and housing conditions in Japan were not so good as in other OECD countries. Reform would promote investment in housing thereby reducing the external surplus."

The 119-page report referred repeatedly to the changes wrought on the economy by the rise of the yen, warning that "the major risk to the emerging recovery is the value of the yen."

It said: "So far, in addition to reducing employment in the exposed sector, companies' response to the rising

yen has been to move production overseas and increase purchases of imported components."

But "a stronger yen would probably result in further losses of export market shares."

The OECD increased its forecast for growth this year to 1.0 per cent from 0.8 per cent in June, mainly because of firm consumer demand and an easing of monetary policy.

The discount rate is at a record low point of 1.75 per cent. This had helped banks to strengthen their finances, but although the problem of bad loans was no longer deteriorating, "it will take some time before the banks return to a more healthy financial position."

But the four packages to boost the economy by 10 per cent of GDP were expected to drive up gross debt to 83 per cent of GDP by 1995, "markedly above the OECD average". Although the net situation was stronger, Japan faced "huge future pension commitments" because the population was ageing.

Ministers had to ensure that there was no "loss of control over government deficits in the medium term."

Exports lift Canadian economy

OTTAWA (AFP) — A continuing export boom combined with a five-year high in company profits helped Canada's economy grow by more than one per cent in the third quarter, the government has reported. Statistics Canada pointed out, however, that virtually all of the growth was recorded in August while it was unchanged in September. The government agency said, overall, the Canadian economy grew at an annual rate of 4.7 per cent in the third quarter of this year, a sharp slowdown compared to the second quarter growth rate of 6.7 per cent. Analysts said the latest figures indicated that the Canadian economy would round out the year with a growth rate of at least four per cent.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1994
By Thomas S. Pearson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: There are no exact aspects today so you may want to turn to handling your practical affairs which can go smoothly as long as you don't appear to be too self-seeking. Make phone calls early to dispel tensions.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Avoid tension in the outside world, and get busy keeping promises you have made to others. Come to a better understanding with your mate.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) If you depend more on an outside partner, you can handle difficult situations very easily, so don't run off on a tangent of some sort.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Keep busy at tasks and you come out on top, but be sure you don't take on additional expenses. Don't lose your temper around loved ones.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Avoid an irate partner today and enjoy yourself. Concentrate on pleasures you want to enjoy with close friends. Show that you have poise and tact.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Forget tasks which are annoying, enjoy the long-term pleasures at home with your loved ones and relieve tension. Catch up on worthwhile reading.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) This is a good day to find the right solution to whatever has been mystifying to you for a long time. Make a copy of whatever you write.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is an ideal day to concentrate on money and property matters. Get advice from an older person about a new endeavour. State your mind clearly.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Rely on your experiences of the past for the solution to today's problems. Don't waste time with those who gossip and spread your secrets.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Discuss a project with an expert before going on with it any further. Your mate can help to make your life much easier in the future.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You are not thinking quite straight now, not a good friend can be helpful, so listen to the advice given to you at this time.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Be most efficient at handling outside activities since they can bring in fine benefits. Enjoy some hobby in the evening with close friends.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Try a different route where some difficult situation is concerned, and get good results. Avoid an irate friend who is out for blood.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise - Zircon

Save water... Every drop counts!

eanuts



Andy Capp



lutt'n' Jeff



THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

DEGAL

REQUE

GLEMIT

BOLIFE

Print answer here: A

Yesterday's Jumble: VERVE VITAL HECTIC TARGET
Answer: Why magnets are found on refrigerators — THEY'RE ATTRACTIVE

THE Daily Crossword by James E. Hirsch, Jr.

ACROSS

1 Swift current

10 Army name: abbr.

14 Author Palao

15 Chutney

16 Spite Sp.

17 Unlucky circumstances

18 Algebran port

20 Twisting

21 boy

22 Title

24 Service period

26 Corley's victim

27 Monday, for one

28 Catcher

30 Severe

31 European prelate

34 Move fast

35 Refined

36 Country line

37 Bureaucracy (consultation)

38 Yuting

39 Lit.

40 Attorney general

41 Indo

42 NSA team

43 Kitchen cupboard

45 Shoestrings

46 Apt. in the family

48 Self. prof.

49 Scarf

50 Word with Free or Yesterday

51 Carpenter

52 He was

53 Hopalong

57 Veranda

58 Ashburt run

59 Vicinity

60 Titles

61 Sacred image

DOWN

1 Get number

2 Jar

3 Salinger tale

4 Insect: abbr.

5 Grab

6 Title

7 Ancient chest

8 Got a Secret

9 Send off: var.

10 Money

11 Accommodate

12 Riverbank steps

13 Sound

14 Shaping

15 Device in secret

16 Ship

17 Puff

18 Medium

19 Snap

20 Target stealer

21 Foot of

22 Order to file

23 Sunny

24 Devil's food

25 Translation piece

26 Son of Isaac

27 Angela's capital

28 Paricle

29 Church calendar

30 Red Sea port

31 Only city

32 Seal

33 Ensign

34 Church calendar

35 Red Sea port

36 Only city

37 Seal

ispheric prosperity'

...totalled about \$160 billion in 1993, 38 per cent of all U.S. sales abroad.

Administration officials say U.S. exports to Latin America alone accounted for \$1.1 billion last year, and produced a trade surplus of more than \$4 billion.

Mr. Clinton's effort to eliminate all trade barriers from the Arctic to the southern tip of South America is not universally popular within his Democratic Party.

In a nine-page letter to the president this week, the House of Representatives, House of Representatives, said that while the administration's goal of free trade is laudable, it is not realistic to expect that the United States can achieve this goal without first securing the economic and political stability of the world.

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business daily beat

A review
of economic news
from the Arabic press

Watch out! inspector's here

Produce retailers hire lottery sellers, kiosk owners and other street vendors to give them early warning if they sight government inspectors or even the car of the Ministry of Supply. Once notified, produce retailers quickly change the price card on vegetables and fruits to reflect government-fixed prices. This latest trick is in addition to having underground or roof facilities to hide deluxe quality for higher prices (Al-Dustour).

The Arab Maritime Bridge Company will be buying high-speed boats soon. The boats will be serving the ports of Aqaba, Nuweibeh, Sharm Al Sheikh and any other ports on the Red Sea. According to a company official, the boats, that can carry up to 250 passengers with their handbags only, will shorten the trip between Aqaba to Nuweibeh to one hour. The official said the opening of the road of peace between Aqaba-Bilat-Taba will negatively affect the operations of the company. But, he added, the company will diversify its activities into tourism and transport of goods and containers (Al-Aswaq).

Payments due to the Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ) have reached about JD 12 million, JD 4 million of which are owed by government departments and the rest by the public. The WAJ provides water to 547,569 subscribers throughout the Kingdom. Subscribers to the water sanitation network total 124,037 (Al-Rai).

Jordan's net foreign debt is expected to fall by 4.2 per cent, to reach \$6.58 billion at the end of this year, down from \$6.87 billion at the end of 1993. According to preliminary figures from the Ministry of Finance, the Kingdom repaid a total of \$570 million in instalments and interest in 1994 (Al-Rai).

The Cairo Amman Bank notified its shareholders that the bank's capital was increased by JD 1 million and that the capital now stands at JD 10 million, with a value of JD 1 per share. Previously each share was worth JD 5. Based on the capital increase, funded by the voluntary reserve, retained earnings and other reserves, shareholders registered on Nov. 15, 1994, were given a free share for every share they held (Al-Rai).

Ready-Mix Concrete and Construction Supplies Company is a public shareholding company under establishment. An announcement called on the founding members to meet on Dec. 11, 1994, to sign the articles of association and the internal basic regulations. Engineer Raja Khalil Al Alami is the head of the founding committee (Al-Rai).

Having to close the accounts before the end of the year, the Jordan Electric Power Company urged its subscribers to settle their dues before the end of December. The company warned that failing to pay all outstanding amounts will force it to cut electricity lines to the defaulters (Sawt Al-Shaab).

Royal Jordanian is self-sufficient in pilots, as it employs 400 pilots compared to only 58 pilots in 1975. Pilot Nasri Ijmean and others say salaries are below the acceptable level, especially when compared to other airlines (Sawt Al-Shaab).

'Jordan-Israel peace no threat to Suez canal'

ISMAILIA, Egypt (R) — Egypt's 125-year-old Suez Canal faces greater competition from existing world trade routes than from plans for new transport networks following peace between Israel and Jordan, a senior official said on Saturday.

Mohammad Ezar Adel, chairman of the Suez Canal

Authority, said new waterways or roads in the region could not challenge the canal's pre-eminent position as the main link between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean.

Proposals for canals linking the Dead Sea with the Red Sea or Mediterranean would

be used only for power generation and irrigation, he added.

Mr. Adel told Reuters the Suez Canal faced greater threats from land trade routes further afield, such as Siberian and Chinese rail links carrying goods from the

far east to Europe.

He said shippers were also considering using icebreakers to open all-year Arctic shipping routes linking the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean. Now the routes are navigable only in summer, he said.

Suez Canal revenues fell three per cent in the first nine months of 1994 to \$1.421 billion. Canal authorities blame changing patterns in world trade but say they are well-placed to capitalise on increased regional trade following progress in the Middle East peace process.

Merrill Lynch: Asian markets to perform better in 1995

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Asian stock markets are likely to perform better in 1995, international brokerage Merrill Lynch has predicted, saying that after China and India, Indonesia could emerge as the next favourite.

Uncertainty in global and other Asian markets could also benefit Singapore, which is likely to gain from broad-based earnings growth in banking, ship-repair, airlines, hotels, office property and retail next year, it said.

The forecast was done against a projected growth of 7.0-to-7.5 per cent for the 10 major Asian economies, not counting Japan, in 1995 and 1996, from 7.7 per cent in 1994.

Merrill Lynch said in its Asian economics strategy report released at a national economic outlook conference that slower growth in China's economy should be offset by continuing buoyant expansion in South East Asia.

"If investment flows are any indication, Indonesia could well emerge the region's strongest economy in 1995," it predicted.

For its 1995 Asian market strategy, Merrill Lynch has rated as positive Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, negative for Hong Kong and Taiwan and neutral

for South Korea and the Philippines.

In the next 12-to-18 months, property-related earnings should do well in Malaysia, while financial sector liberalisation could provide a third engine of growth for Singapore's economy, Merrill Lynch said.

In South Korea, margin expansion should see continuing strong earnings growth next year, while India's structural reforms are expected to start yielding tangible growth.

In terms of economic fundamentals, it rated as above average the markets of Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, average of India, Indonesia, South Korea, the Philippines, but a below average for Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Merrill Lynch said property prices were a major unknown in Hong Kong, and earnings were slowing in at least two sectors: banking and property development.

"The run-up to 1997 could produce more political wranglings with Beijing," it said.

For Taiwan, it noted that although a breakthrough in mainland China policies could act as a key market catalyst in 1995, growth prospects would remain unexciting in the near term.

Financial Markets

Jordan Times
in co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

| Currency | Nov. 12/94 | Nov. 12/94 |
|------------------------|------------|------------|
| Sterling Pound | 1.5636 | 1.5600 |
| Deutsche Mark | 1.5770 | 1.5770 |
| Swiss Franc | 1.3368 | 1.3360 |
| French Franc | 5.4140 | 5.4165 |
| Japanese Yen | 100.55 | 100.08 |
| European Currency Unit | 1.2085 | 1.2120 |

1 USD Per STG, 100 Yen Per STG, 100 Yen Per STG

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European Currency Unit

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 10/12/1994

| COMPANY'S NAME | NO. OF SHARES TRADED | TRADED VOLUME JD | PREV. CLOSING PRICE |
|--|----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| ARAB BANK | 420 | 77,470 | 184.250 |
| JORDAN NATIONAL BANK | 2,399 | 10,743 | 4.550 |
| MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK | 2,590 | 398 | 1.590 |
| INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK | 3,500 | 10,077 | 2.900 |
| THE HOUSING BANK | 2,000 | 12,080 | 5.550 |
| JORDAN KOWAT BANK | 9,074 | 27,218 | 3.030 |
| JORDAN GULF BANK | 1,050 | 1,724 | 1.660 |
| ARAB JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK | 1,550 | 5,751 | 3.750 |
| JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK | 4,094 | 14,870 | 3.630 |
| UNION BANK FOR SAVING & INVESTMENT | 56 | 280 | 5.000 |
| BUSINESS BANK | 250 | 930 | 3.720 |
| JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK | 500 | 2,450 | 4.950 |
| REIT REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING | 450 | 1,454 | 3.270 |
| AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT | 1,370,286 | 2,123,401 | 1.530 |
| ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN | 200 | 766 | 3.830 |
| PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK | 13,350 | 22,997 | 1.770 |
| JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER | 6,390 | 9,946 | 1.560 |
| JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW | 41,850 | 63,612 | 1.520 |
| JORDAN HOTEL & TOURISM | 227 | 1,345 | 5.750 |
| ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS | 3,250 | 16,800 | 5.190 |
| NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES | 1,925 | 4,780 | 2.500 |
| REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT | 1,011 | 1,355 | 1.360 |
| JORDAN GULF REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT | 2,500 | 3,010 | 1.240 |
| JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER | 400 | 416 | 1.060 |
| MACHINERY EQUIP. RENTING & MAINTENANCE | 700 | 556 | 0.820 |
| JORDAN PRESS FOUNDATION / ALBA | 200 | 2,250 | 11.700 |
| UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMODITY HOTELS | 7,900 | 19,552 | 2.500 |
| ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION | 3,000 | 10,077 | 3.370 |
| THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES | 15,939 | 45,392 | 2.860 |
| JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES | 2,050 | 5,388 | 2.670 |
| JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY | 420 | 3,882 | 9.240 |
| JORDAN TANKING | 575 | 4,140 | 7.200 |
| THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL | 305 | 1,506 | 4.950 |
| THE JORDAN WORSTED MILLS | 1,100 | 8,910 | 8.100 |
| ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING | 21,422 | 115,786 | 5.870 |
| THE JORDAN PIPES MANUFACTURING | 550 | 1,584 | 2.910 |
| RAFTA INDUSTRIES | 2,200 | 9,991 | 2.750 |
| ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE | 19,400 | 19,410 | 1.020 |
| ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRY | 1,000 | 7,000 | 7.000 |
| LIVESTOCK & POULTRY | 59,190 | 54,484 | 0.930 |
| ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING | 250 | 350 | 1.410 |
| NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY | 500 | 2,125 | 4.300 |
| JORDAN ROPEWORK INDUSTRIES | 9,000 | 13,527 | 1.500 |
| JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/JIMCO | 3,750 | 3,113 | 0.830 |
| JORDAN SULPHUR-CHEMICALS | 1,350 | 2,704 | 2.050 |
| ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS | 2,300 | 6,430 | 2.820 |
| KAMFER INVESTMENT | 500 | 900 | 1.850 |
| UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES | 2,500 | 10,850 | 4.210 |
| JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO. | 4,757 | 12,782 | 2.690 |

GRAND TOTAL 1,627,856 2,776,286

NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET : 341262

TRADED VOLUME IN THE PARALLEL MARKET : JD 715736

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Jordan Soccer League

Al Hussein regain lead; Al Jeel celebrate 1st win

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The top four teams exchanged standings after the weekend's action in the Jordan Soccer League. Al Hussein regained the lead by winning 4-1 over Al Ramtha.

Al Wihdat dropped to second place and Al Faisali moved down to fourth after their 0-0 and 1-1 draws with Al Jazireh and Al Ahli. Meanwhile, Al Ramtha moved up to third after a 3-0 win over Al Jeel.

Al Jeel scored their first win of the competition defeating Shabab Al Hussein 1-0 and Al Qadissieh 2-1. Kufroum and Al Ramtha moved up to second and third place respectively as they moved away from the relegation zone.

Al Hussein's 4-1 victory further improved their standing and gave them the lead for now in the prestigious group.

Aref Hussein stunned Al Ramtha when he opened scoring for Al Hussein in the first minute. However, Karmel equalised by their top scorer Nizar Kamekh in the 20th minute.

Al Hussein's scoring spree started early in the second half when Mazen Nubar added the second goal from a header in the 22nd minute. Four minutes later Aref Hussein scored his second and his team's third goal which made Al Hussein retreat to defensive positions. Nevertheless, Nubar managed another goal in the 81st minute to seal his team's victory.

Al Wihdat dropped to second place after a surprising 0-0 draw with fifth placed Al Jazireh. It was the fourth draw for Al Wihdat who otherwise might have taken a clear lead atop the standings as they remained the only undefeated team of the competition. Al Faisali's draw with Al Ahli might also cost the holder dearly, as they

struggle to advance their standing and improve their surprisingly inconsistent form this season.

After finishing the first round in third place, Al Faisali cannot afford to lose any points and must start scoring some wins to raise their points if they wish to retain their third consecutive crown.

Jiryes Tadros scored Al Faisali's only goal against Al Ahli in the 35th minute as his teammates Mohammad Mahadin and Ja'far Hamad lost definite scoring chances.

Al Ahli's Khalil Fatafah scored the vital equaliser for his team who were content with the draw and thus remained in sixth place.

Al Arabi's loss to Al Ramtha further worsened their situation as they finished the first round among the last four.

Al Ramtha, who had beaten Al Arabi 1-0 in the Jordan Cup semifinal last week, proved they were the better and moved to third place after their 3-0 win.

Mansour Azaizeh opened scoring in the 35th minute. Mohammad Alawneh lost the most definite chance to equalise for Al Arabi, while teammate Saher Hijawi's powerful shot was blocked by the goalkeeper.

Al Ramtha scored their two other goals by Farid Shananeh in the 80th minute and Salim Diyabat in the final minute. Meanwhile, last-placed Al Jeel celebrated their first win of the competition when they upset 10th-placed Shabab Al Hussein 2-1.

Although the win is not likely to help Al Jeel in avoiding relegation, Shabab Al Hussein's chances of staying in the first division will definitely be hurt as they are unable to improve their standing.

Shabab Al Hussein's top scorer Maher Sarsour scored his team's only goal in the first minute of the match, only to be stunned by an equalising goal by Al Jeel's Zakariya Al Shibel six minutes later.

Shabab Al Hussein were the better team and had more chances throughout the match. They were therefore upset when their opponents netted their second goal in the 87th minute to clinch their first victory.

Al Qadissieh scored their third win of the competition and added an important two points to their standings when they overcame Kufroum 2-1.

Al Qadissieh, who were a top five team last year, disappointed their fans when they languished in 9th place for most of the competition before moving up to eighth in the final week of the first round.

Their win will therefore raise their morale as they seek to move away from the grim last four.

Kufroum, a newcomer to the division whose impressive results at first enabled them to remain in a halfway position, were the first to score by striker Islam Diyabat in the 13th minute.

Al Qadissieh equalised late in the 51st minute and added their winning goal in the final five minutes.

Standings after 12th week

| | P | W | D | L | GF | GA | Pts |
|-------------------|----|---|---|----|----|----|-----|
| Hussein | 12 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 34 | 11 | 20 |
| Wihdat | 12 | 8 | 4 | — | 14 | 3 | 20 |
| Ramtha | 12 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 22 | 5 | 18 |
| Faisali | 12 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 22 | 7 | 17 |
| Jazireh | 12 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 16 | 8 | 16 |
| Ahli | 12 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 14 | 15 | 12 |
| Kufroum | 12 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 20 | 23 | 11 |
| Qadissieh | 12 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 14 | 19 | 10 |
| Arabi | 12 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 13 | 25 | 8 |
| Shabab Al Hussein | 12 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 16 | 28 | 5 |
| Karmel | 12 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 9 | 30 | 4 |
| Jeel | 12 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 8 | 28 | 3 |

Yria, Iraq escape world bans

ALALUMPUR (R) — Iraq and Yria have escaped year bans from world football after allegations that they fielded over-age players in the Asian under-19 championships in October in Yria.

Yria, who won the tournament, are now also free to enter their place in next year's World Under-20 Championships in Nigeria.

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) declared an amnesty Saturday against alleged age-cheats after X-ray evidence was ruled inconclusive by world ruling body FIFA.

The X-rays, which determine age by analysing bone growth, strongly suggested both teams fielded over-age

players in Jakarta, according to the AFC.

"We have been advised by FIFA that the X-ray evidence we compiled was not suitable to be used as a foundation of guilt," said AFC general-secretary Peter Velappan.

He added that the amnesty would be "absolutely the last chance" for Asian football teams.

Agassi fined \$6,000 for Grand Slam outburst

MUNICH (Agencies) — World No. 2 Andre Agassi was fined \$6,000 Saturday for firing a volley of obscenities at the umpire during his losing quarter-final at the Grand Slam Cup.

Agassi swore in the first set of his match against Sweden's Magnus Larsson after a line call went against him, earning a warning for an audible obscenity.

He then swore again in frustration and was penalised a point which cost him his service game and set a discouraged Agassi on his way to losing the match.

The International Tennis Federation (ITF) referee fined him \$2,000 for the audible obscenity, and a further \$4,000 for verbal abuse.

Matters could have been worse. Agassi said he had in fact sworn aloud a third time, but the umpire chose to disregard the offence for which the automatic penalty would have been a default and presumably an even stiffer fine.

There was also a \$1,000 fine for Goran Ivanisevic for an ill-tempered outburst at the umpire during his winning quarter-final against Boris Becker.

Ironically, Ivanisevic is technically suspended for two months by the Association of Tennis Professionals for accumulating more than \$10,000 of fines this year — but is playing in Munich because the ITF runs the event and has chosen to overlook



World No. 2 Andre Agassi

the suspension. Aside from ruffled pride, the fines will not significantly dent either player's earnings here.

Agassi took home \$500,000 including a \$250,000 bonus for being U.S. Open champion, and Ivanisevic was assured of \$425,000 even if he lost the semifinal against world number one Pete Sampras.

Agassi admitted he was ruled by his emotions.

"Of course it's better if you don't swear. But it's human and sometimes it's impossible to do anything else."

"He gave me a warning for an obscenity. I mean, obscenity is going on a lot. And I just think that a lot of times these guys don't make the right call because they are looking straight at your

mouth and they are, in a sense, waiting for you to say something."

He also argued that, given the chances of abusive language being picked up by television, court-side microphones should be removed.

"If they don't want the people to hear it on the TV, then get the microphones off the court."

"The reality is, it (swearing) happens, and because it happens, I don't think there should be as many microphones on the court."

On the next point, Agassi's service return just missed the umpire's chair. The public laughed and Agassi apologised to the umpire.

"I did not do it on purpose. It was a really bad shot, really bad," he said. No one was fooled, but the umpire appeared to accept Agassi's explanation.

Agassi fought back in style in the second set, making superb returns despite Larsson's lightning serves.

Larsson, world-ranked 19th, won 6-3, 1-6, 6-0 to line up a semi-final with another American, Todd Martin, who beat French Open champion Sergi Bruguera 6-4, 7-6 (7-5).

By contrast, Martin's match against Bruguera was a placid affair, with both players maintaining their service game in the first set until the American led 5-4.

The Spaniard promptly cracked under the pressure of the \$6 million tournament, handing his opponent both set point and the set with two consecutive double faults.

The second set went a tie-break, with the American's sheer power breaking the deadlock between the two men.

Croatia's Goran Ivanisevic and world number one Pete Sampras will meet in the other semi-final.



Pau Orthez' Frederic Guinot (centre) scores for his team during the basketball match against Birex Verona (AFP photo)

Real Madrid, Olympiakos lead European basketball standings

LONDON (R) — Italy's Pesaro joined Real Madrid at the top of Group A with a narrow 86-85 victory in Moscow while in an all-Greek clash Panathinaikos beat Paok Salonika 72-63, in the men's European Champion Clubs' Cup semifinal basketball series.

In Group B in Leverkusen, Bayer Leverkusen of Germany beat Joventut Badalona of Spain 53 (37-20).

Leading scorers: Bayer Leverkusen — Abdul Deem 25, Thomas Garrick 17.

Joventut Badalona — Rafael Jofresa 14, Ebeling 14.

In Barcelona: Cibona Zagreb of Croatia beat Barcelona of Spain 74-70.

STANDINGS

Group A

| | P | W | L | Pts. |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|------|
| Real Madrid (Spain) | 5 | 4 | 1 | 9 |
| Pesaro (Italy) | 5 | 4 | 1 | 9 |
| Panathinaikos (Greece) | 5 | 3 | 2 | 8 |
| CSKA Moscow (Russia) | 5 | 3 | 2 | 8 |
| Paok Salonika (Greece) | 5 | 2 | 3 | 7 |
| Olympija Ljubljana (Slovenia) | 5 | 2 | 3 | 7 |
| Maccabi Tel Aviv (Israel) | 5 | 2 | 3 | 7 |
| Benfica (Portugal) | 5 | 0 | 5 | 5 |

Group B

| | P | W | L | Pts. |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|------|
| Olympiakos (Greece) | 5 | 4 | 1 | 9 |
| Barcelona (Spain) | 5 | 3 | 2 | 8 |
| Bologna (Italy) | 5 | 3 | 2 | 8 |
| Istanbul (Turkey) | 5 | 3 | 2 | 8 |
| Limoges (France) | 5 | 3 | 2 | 8 |
| Cibona Zagreb (Croatia) | 5 | 1 | 4 | 6 |
| Bayer Leverkusen (Germany) | 5 | 1 | 4 | 6 |
| Joventut Badalona (Spain) | 5 | 0 | 5 | 5 |

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TAMMAM HIRSHI
C. P. JUNE 1994

KILL THE ENTRY

Neither vulnerable West deals.

NORTH

3 2

A Q J 10 8 5 4

10 7 6

WEST

A 8

K Q 10 9 7

A J 8 5 4

K 7

9 6 3

Q J 9 2

8 3

SOUTH

A Q J 7 5 4 2

6

2

A K 4 3

The bidding:

West North East South

1 3 3 4

5 7 Pass Pass 5 *

Pass Pass

Pass Pass

Opening lead: King of V

A long suit in dummy can cause

anxiety in the heart of even the

stoutest defender. One way to try to

neutralize the threat is to attack the

side entries to the suit. The suit

might even be neutralized when

there are no side entries.

After North's preemptive jump

overall, South elected to compete

at the five-level despite the odds

that it belongs to the opponents.

Had South chosen to double, North-

South would have collected 500

points. But then there would have

been no tale to tell.

With routine defense, the con-

tract would probably break home.

Suppose West leads the king of

hearts and continues the suit for

declarer to ruff. A low spade is led.

West follows low and dummy's ten

wins. Declarer can no longer be

defeated.

After returning to hand with the

king of clubs, declarer forces out the

ace of trumps. Thanks to a double-

ton king of diamonds outside, declar-

er will be able to get two club

discards on the diamonds.

When this hand was played in a

quiz match, Dr. George Rosen-

kranz of Mexico City held the West

hand. The play to the first two

tricks went as described, but when

declarer led a low trump, West flew

up with the ace and shifted to a low

diamond!

Declarer's fate was sealed. With-

out a second diamond in hand, there

was no longer any way to reach

dummy. After successfully finessing

the ten of diamonds, declarer was

able to discard one club on the ace,

but even though the king dropped,

there was no second discard. West

was able to ruff the third diamond to

complete a one-trick set.

Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan
Santa all the way from Finland

FOR THE first time of the History of Christmas festivities and on the invitation of Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan, British Airways, Al Ahlia Abella SuperStores and Pepsi, Santa Claus is visiting Jordan to take part of the Holy season festivities.

Arriving on December 12th on British Airways London-Amman route all the way from the Town of Rovaniemi which lies on the Arctic circle in Finland. Every year, children from all over Scandinavia and indeed much further afield travel to see him and his reindeer to tell him their Christmas wishes and ask him to personally sign Christmas cards for their loved ones.

Santa, and during his stay in Amman will join the children of Jordan celebrating Christmas. He will visit Charity organisations and will take part of the children Christmas party and perform the switching on of the Christmas tree on

December 15th in the afternoon at Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan. In the afternoon of Wednesday the 14th of December, he will have an appearance at Al Ahlia Abella Super Stores.

Your child will have the opportunity to present a card for Santa to take with him to the children of Scandinavia from the children of Jordan, and have the chance to win a mother and child return ticket Amman-London-Amman on British Airways and a four night stay at a Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan.

There will be opportunities to have souvenir photographs taken of your child posing along side the famous man with the characteristic long white beard and flowing red robes.

This activity is one of many Hotel Inter-Continental plans in collaboration of local companies and societies in his efforts to cement his relationship with the local communities.

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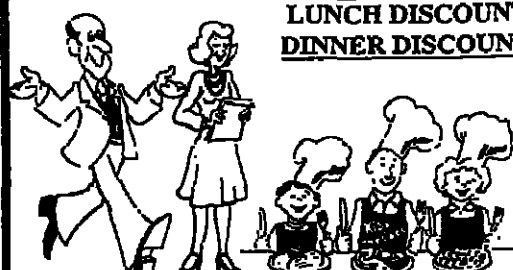
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EU defines strategy for integrating eastern Europe

ESSEN, Germany (AFP) — The European Union's final summit as a 12-nation body closed here on Saturday with EU leaders setting out a strategy to open its doors to at least 10 former communist states in eastern Europe.

Heads of state and government from six of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia were present as their EU counterparts formally endorsed a commission strategy designed to help them prepare for membership through a combination of aid, opening of markets and advice on adapting legislation to comply with EU rules.

"It is an historic moment," said Czech Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus. "I hope both parts of Europe take this as a message that the EU is ready to open its doors to the east."

Although the EU has pledged to support the eastern Europeans in preparing

for membership, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl warned it was up to them to meet the challenge of transforming their former command economies to make them compatible with the rules of the EU single market.

"It is important that we don't raise false expectations," Mr. Kohl said. "These countries have to carry most of the weight of moving closer to us on their own."

Mr. Klaus said his country, which is seen as a leading candidate for early membership, was ready for the challenge.

"We are ready to pay the costs and we hope to receive the benefits."

Asked if he thought EU membership was possible for the Czechs by the year 2000, he replied: "You mean that late?"

Hungarian Foreign Minister Laszlo Kovacs said 2000 was an "ambitious but not

unrealistic target."

"Today was a breakthrough. Now it is up to us to make ourselves compatible with the EU."

The six states represented at Essen have all signed associating Europe agreements with the EU but the EU leaders made it clear they wanted to see four more countries drawn into the enlargement process.

The summit mandated the commission to negotiate Europe agreements with the three Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and, subject to the resolution of a dispute with Italy, the former Yugoslav republic of Slovenia.

As a first stage in the Essen strategy for eastern expansion, the summit called on the commission to draw up a detailed white paper laying out the steps the countries will have to take to adapt their former command economies to the rules of the EU's single market.



The heads of state and government pose for the family picture on the first day of the European Union Summit held at Essen on Dec. 9 and 10 (AFP photo)

Europeans chart long-term Euro-Mediterranean strategy

By Ayman Al Safadi in Essen

THE EUROPEAN Council Saturday adopted what president of the European Commission Jacques Delors called "a very difficult and very ambitious Mediterranean" policy that will have the long-term goal of creating a Euro-Mediterranean free trade area.

Addressing a joint press conference with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl at the end of a two-day European summit, Mr. Delors stressed the importance of strengthening European-Mediterranean relations, noting that the interest of the continent in the Mediterranean was reflected in the fact that the EU was the largest donor to the Mideast peace process.

In reference to the limited visibility that the European role in the peace process has in comparison to the high profile of American involvement, the retiring commission president said: "Don't believe in appearances. We are the largest contributor."

Mr. Delors said that Europe was the "paymaster" of the Casablanca economic summit even though many perceived it as an American and Israeli organized event.

Similar emphasis on the European role in the Mediterranean was put by Mr. Kohl who stressed the interconnectedness between the stability and security of the two regions.

Mr. Kohl said the European Mediterranean strategy was an important item on the agenda of the summit, adding that Europe wanted to develop relations with the region to promote security, stability

and growth.

The summit has agreed to hold a Euro-Mediterranean conference in the second half of 1995 under the Spanish presidency with the purpose of exploring means of increasing cooperation between the two areas. But the meeting fell short of agreeing on any specific short term economic aid to the region.

In harmony with what sources said was a British position, the summit did commit specified amounts of aid at this point.

Figuring high on the agenda of the summit, which marks the end of the German presidency of the European Union (EU), is relations with Eastern and Central European countries which received a strong signal that they are welcome to eventually join the union.

Leaders of six such countries were hosted to lunch by the 12 leaders of the EU yesterday where they received the message that relations between their countries and Europe will be developed under a policy that will finally integrate them into the union as full fledged members (see story this page).

But Mr. Kohl was careful to emphasize at the press conference that a great deal of work is required before Eastern European countries were admitted into the union and that the "associated partners" would have to carry the major share of the burden in qualifying for entering the Western European club whose membership will increase from 12 to 15 next year when Finland, Sweden and Austria become official partners in the EU.

Mr. Kohl said that each

east and central European country will be judged on its own merit and that the EU's policy towards east and central Europe did not presuppose accession for countries that do not eventually meet the criteria.

In a statement that reflected the limitations of the EU's options in dealing with the conflict in Bosnia, the European leaders made the traditional call for an end of hostilities in the Balkans and stressed the importance of solving the conflict through dialogue.

The statement condemned the "violation of the safe area of Bihac by the Bosnian Serbs" and urged them to withdraw from the city.

The European leaders warned of the "severe" consequences for the civilian population in Bosnia if the United Nations Protection Force was forced to withdraw.

"UNPROFOR should continue its crucial mission of providing humanitarian assistance and saving human life," said the statement, urging Serbian forces to allow it freedom of movement so that it can fulfil its task.

The European leaders urged Serbian leaders to accept the peace plan prepared by the contact group for Bosnia as the basis for a settlement which provides a viable and reasonable solution for all parties.

The statement said that the territorial compromise could be adjusted later by mutual agreement between the parties, pointing out that constitutional arrangements that will preserve the integrity of Bosnia can be reached in the future.

Sources said that French President Francois Mitterrand defended the Euro-

pean position against lifting the arms embargo on Bosnian Muslims during the summit's discussion of the conflict there and heavily criticised calls to lift it made by the Republican leadership in the U.S. Congress.

The dominant issue on the agenda of the summit however was the economic situation in Europe and the unemployment problem from which most members of the union are suffering.

The summit adopted a white paper on economic growth presented by the European Commission and many observers here say the paper was adopted because it leaves it to the individual member states to implement its provisions.

"The main message going out of (Essen) is one of realistic optimism," Mr. Kohl told a press conference attended by hundreds of journalists.

At the end of 1994," he said, "there is no reason to lapse into Europessimism," pointing out what he called the significant positive developments in the last few years.

"We look to the future and the only way is to create the European house," said Mr. Kohl as he praised Mr. Delors who is expected to run for the French presidency when he retires from the top job at the EC "as the sole of this exercise."

Not many observers here however shared Mr. Kohl's optimism on the future of "the one European house" with Eurosceptics wondering what kind of Europe was the chancellor talking about with EU membership expected to expand beyond any possibility for a workable union.

Yemen says its forces clashed with Saudi troops

SANAA (AFP) — Saudi and Yemeni soldiers have clashed on their border leaving casualties on both sides, Yemeni military officials said, on Saturday, reporting that tension remained high in the area.

"Violent clashes Tuesday and Wednesday opposed Saudi and Yemeni units stationed on the joint border in the north of the province of Sada," in northwest Yemen, an official told AFP, asking not to be named.

Three Yemenis were wounded and there were "Saudi losses," he said without specifying.

The "fighting allowed

Sanaa's forces to recover the regions where the Saudis had put up observation posts and built roads."

Yemen accused its neighbour on Wednesday of putting up observation posts and building roads "deep into Yemeni territory in the provinces of Sada and Mahra," on its northwest and northeast border with Saudi Arabia.

But Riyadh denied the accusations saying the work had been carried out on Saudi soil and added it was ready to set up a joint inquiry commission "to shed light on the situation on the ground."

The two countries are in

dispute over the southern Saudi provinces of Najran, Jizan and Asir, which have been under Saudi control since the Taef accord of 1993, and adjoin Yemen's northern border.

An official close to Yemen's presidency said Sanaa "prefers the diplomatic option and is in contact with the Saudi authorities to defuse the tension at the border."

Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al Faisal is due to meet his Yemeni counterpart Abdul Karim Al Iryani on the sidelines of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) summit preparatory meeting Saturday,

IAF calls for boycott of Israeli mission

AMMAN — On the eve of the official opening of the Israeli embassy in Amman the Islamic Action Front (IAF) Saturday urged Jordanians to boycott the embassy, to refrain from applying for visas from the mission and to boycott all its activities.

"We are sure that the Israeli embassy here will serve as a centre for hatching conspiracies on our culture, our mosques, our Koran, our schools, our morals and our national economy," the IAF said in a statement Saturday.

The statement urged Jordanians to unify ranks to "isolate this embassy so that it would find itself totally outcast within an environment that rejects its existence so that the enemy would realise that official normalisation of relations can be by no means subjugate our people's will."

The statement recalled the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel saying it offered the best guide for Jordan because the Egyptian people "rejected the presence of the

Jews" and boycotted their embassy as alien with no place amongst the Arab population.

Describing the raising of the Israeli flag on the embassy in Amman Sunday as a black day, the statement said the event represented a departure from the nation's principled stands and a violation of the majority of the Jordanian people's will.

The statement praised the Palestinian intifada and said that Arabs and Muslims continue to hold on to their rights, "despite the Zionists' arrogance and the backing Israel gets from the United States and the Western nations."

Also Saturday, eight political parties including the IAF issued a separate statement expressing regret over a government ban on a march they planned, for Sunday from the Interior Ministry Circle to the Foreign Ministry.

The statement said that the

eight parties had been planning to organise the march in protest against the opening of the Israeli embassy, and a sit-in at the Foreign Ministry, when they received clear orders from the Amman governor banning the march.

The statement said the eight parties regretted the ban which they described as contrary to the rules of democracy, saying they preserve the right to deal with this issue with legal and democratic means.

The statement was signed by the following parties: The Jordan Baath Socialist Party, the IAF, the National Action Front, the Jordanian Socialist Democratic People's Party, the Jordanian Communist Party, the Jordanian Democratic Arab Party and the Jordanian Democratic Unionists Party.

Later on the day, a government source told the Jordan Times it was agreed that the parties would hold a vigil protest in front of the prime ministry on Sunday.

Intellectuals, politicians discuss Jordanian-Palestinian 'sensitivities'

By Nermeen Murad Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian and Palestinian politicians and intellectuals yesterday opened two days of discussions on their relationship and most speakers underlined the inevitability of political unity between Jordan and any independent Palestinian entity.

At the seminar on the future of the Jordanian-Palestinian future relations, organised jointly by the World Affairs Council, the Jerusalem-based Arab Economists Association and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, speakers from both sides gingerly approached issues that many of them believe have hindered a "healthy" relationship between the Kingdom and the Palestinian leadership and people.

Despite the apparent consensus among most participants that a Jordanian-Palestinian unity was an inevitable outcome of the Middle East peace talks with Israel, both sides appeared determined on defining and resolving what at least one participant termed as "contentious perceptions" among the people from both sides before final formula for unity would look like.

Apart from the opening

speech by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, delivered on his behalf by Senator Kamel Abu Jaber (see page 1), other papers and discussions centred primarily on the reasons behind the tense relations between the Jordanian and Palestinian leaderships and the impact of that tension on the relationship between the two peoples.

Premier Majali, who at the outset of his speech said that he did not wish to lessen the importance of the past, said the two sides need "creative thinking that would assess the relationship from its positive side so that a much brighter and promising future can be built."

"I have come across those who think that Jordan's refusal to deal with the issue of a confederation is because of its refusal to accept an independent Palestinian entity. Such claims are false," Dr. Majali said.

"Why should we start by defining the frame of a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation? There are many aspects of the relationship that make this end the best solution and we may agree to that."

But Dr. Majali added, "to my understanding, a confederation means a centralised leadership from both governments, flags and national anthem and

each party administers its own internal affairs. Until now, this simplified structure of a confederation lacks one of the basic elements. Palestinian sovereignty over their land, in order to complete the executive, legislative and judicial structures," he said.

On that, many of the participants agreed with Dr. Majali: It was too early to define the parameters of the future before a Palestinian entity was established.

But very few agreed to leave the past behind, for even although the title of the seminar was "the future of the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship", many of the speeches in the morning session of the first day appeared to try to address the "past," giving rise to sensitivities from both sides.

The first paper, "cooperation on the political level," was a "candid" portrayal of "the Palestinian point of view." The paper was presented by Bir Zeit political science professor Ziad Abu Amr.

Dr. Abu Amr did not fail to bring out some sensitivities from the Jordanian participants over how the Kingdom's past role in the West Bank was viewed by the Palestinians.

"The Palestinian-Jordanian relationship has

been based on a foundation of mistrust and suspicion," Dr. Abu Amr told participants, citing several political developments that led the Palestinians to suspect the intentions of Jordan towards Palestinians.

"This suspicion has continued to permeate the thinking of all Palestinian political factions until this day," Dr. Abu Amr added.

This perception among the Palestinians of Jordan's role in what was termed by Dr. Abu Amr as "burying the Palestinian issue," increased "the fears of the regime in Jordan and consolidated its perception that the Palestinian national movement wanted to remove it."

"Therefore the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship continued to be contradictory," he said.

In his 8-page paper Dr. Abu Amr detailed several political developments in the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship as well as the relationship of each with Israel. He concluded that both sides have to reach an understanding and agreement that would resolve their mutual concerns as well as address their mutual interests.

"Both sides have to realise that their strategic option lies primarily in establishing a strong relationship between them and both

have to be careful not to strategically calculate according to their independent agreements with Israel," Dr. Abu Amr warned.

"The idea behind this seminar is to focus on the positive elements between the two sides to establish a strong relationship that could not be affected by either leadership," Lower House member and member of the World Affairs Council Abdullah Ensour said.

Dr. Ensour was responding to Dr. Abu Amr's assessment that the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship was clouded by an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust.

In response to Dr. Abu Amr's paper, Dr. Ensour said that it appeared to forewarn of failure of any attempts to improve relations between the two sides by "stressing the past and describing that past as if it was only based on negative aspects."

Sharif Fawaz Sharaf, who also took Dr. Abu Amr to task over this point countered that "we cannot move forward if we continue to look back with suspicion, or harbour any feelings of mistrust."

Sharif Fawaz also took offence at Dr. Abu Amr's use of the "Hashemite regime" saying that it appeared to have "negative

connotations."

"Negative terminology like 'maintaining the Hashemite regime' will only make the suspicion and differences continue between the two sides," said Sharif Fawaz.

Dr. Abu Amr responded by saying that he did not intend to use these connotations in a negative way but that the past must be confronted with honesty in order to move forward to a better future relationship.

"This paper was intended to show the Palestinian peoples' point of view and this is the reality. These perceptions do exist. Do we want to deal with the reality and address it properly or are we looking to use descriptive words without substance?" he said.

Bashir Barghouti, head of the Palestinian People's Party, formerly the Communist Party, said that for years both Palestinian and Jordanian politicians have failed to respect the "idiosyncrasies of each party's politics."

"When we reach a situation where we recognise the idiosyncrasies of each side's politics we can move to the more general politics which could bring about unity," he said.

Ghassan Khatib, a former Palestinian negotiator and professor at Bir Zeit University, said that the

apparent sensitivities of the participants to the different views should be seen in a positive light.

"The seminar is an opportunity to start a public debate on the sensitivity of the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship."

"There is a feeling of common interest on both sides that is not expressed on the official level. This could create public pressure on the leadership level," Mr. Khatib said.

"It could provide an agenda for official discussion when pinpointing the differences and potentials," Mr. Khatib told the Jordan Times.

Dr. Abu Amr told the Jordan Times that the Palestinian side in the seminar was keen on reaching a formula and understanding that would determine the future Jordanian-Palestinian relationship.

"We both need each other in political, economic and social terms," Dr. Abu Amr said. "Societies on both sides have to play a positive role that could help in providing certain modalities to start a practical relationship."

Eleven working papers from each side would be presented at the seminar covering the Jordanian and Palestinian views on issues ranging from political, economic and legal relations to environmental issues.



Japan's crown princess marks 31st birthday

TOKYO (AP) — Palace watchers had thought Japan's Western-educated crown princess would bring a new, more open style to the conservative imperial household. But since retreating behind the palace walls last year after marrying the heir to the throne, Crown Princess Masako, who turned 31 Friday, has also stayed firmly behind the traditional royal veil. She celebrated her birthday Friday by sharing lunch with Crown Prince Naruhito, the palace said, after earlier denying requests for birthday interviews. Emperor Akihito and Prince Naruhito grant such pre-birthday audiences, but Princess Masako only released a statement through her royal handlers. "I would like to fully carry out all of my duties as the crown princess while helping the emperor and empress, together with the crown prince," it said. The multilingual, Oxford and Harvard-educated daughter of a high-ranking diplomat spent two years in the Foreign Ministry. After the palace announced her engagement to Prince Naruhito almost two years ago, the Japanese media was abuzz with speculation they might be the first truly accessible royal couple. But she has become the picture of the traditional, demure princess whose main duties are to bear children and follow her husband on official journeys. Princess Masako's performance in both of those tasks is a favourite topic in gossip television shows and weekly magazines, which have conducted a close, but as yet unfulfilled, watch for signs of pregnancy. To make matters worse for Princess Masako, Princess Kiko, the wife of the crown prince's younger brother, is expecting her second child in January. If that baby is a boy — and a potential heir — the pressure on Princess Masako will be intense.

Bachelor senator to wed opposition colleague's widow

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Massachusetts Democrat John Kerry, regarded as one of the U.S. Senate's most eligible bachelors, will marry the widow of a former Republican colleague, the Boston Globe newspaper reported Friday. Sen. Kerry, 50, is the state's junior senator and recognised for championing liberal causes at home and abroad. His wife-to-be, Teresa Heinz, 56, is the widow of Pennsylvania Republican and millionaire John Heinz who died in a 1991 plane crash. She was estimated to have inherited \$600 million when her husband died. Kerry is also from a wealthy background.

'Work is good for your migraine'

PARIS (AFP) — Work is probably the best way of preventing a migraine attack, according to research published Saturday in the British medical journal Lancet. Doctor Joseph Blau, of the British national Neurological and Neuro-Surgical Hospital in London, spoke to some 50 doctors for his research and concluded that "motivation, commitment to work and the correct use of medication" was the best means of combating migraine attacks. The doctors, aged 26 to 72, were asked about their migraines, their time off work and the treatment they took. They had all suffered migraines over periods ranging from five to 58 years but 36 of them had taken a combined total of just 42 days off work in a total period of 828 years of professional life. Some 16 of them had never had a day off while another 14 had taken several days off, amounting to 444 days off work in 276 years working life. According to Dr. Blau, a few of the doctors commented that work suppressed their migraines but that once they had reached home they took to bed. This led him to believe that it was professional motivation that stop the migraines from happening. "We should recall that the migraine General Ulysses Grant was suffering lifted dramatically when he received news of the surrender of the southern forces in the American Civil War," Dr. Blau added.

إلى امال